

Being Busy

At work, a senior manager asked us: “Are you busy fools?” He qualified the question – it was not meant as an insult. It is very easy to be busy for the sake of being busy; to confuse activity with purpose. He was encouraging us to look carefully at what we do, to be active in the right things.

We live in a hectic world, with so much going on, that we can be too busy to stop and think. The demands of work, family and friends can mean that we never lift our view above that which is immediate. We should take time to do just this, to make sure that we are busying ourselves with valuable, worthwhile, lasting things.

Busy Nature

When we look at the natural world, we see lots of activity, but generally with purpose. The classic example is the ‘busy bee’. On a summer’s day we can see these industrious insects, moving from flower to flower as they collect the all-important nectar. It is amazing to think that a single bee can visit up to 5,000 flowers in a single day. Even more so, it has been estimated that to make one pound of honey, a hive of bees must travel over 55,000 miles and visit two million flowers!

But this is busyness with great purpose. The nectar feeds the bees, allowing them to work, to reproduce, to make honey, to feed their young and to ensure the survival of their hive.

The Bible also points us to nature in thinking about this topic. Speaking about anyone who is lazy and doesn’t do the things they should, the writer of the Proverbs wrote:



Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, which, having no captain, overseer or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest (Proverbs 6:6–8).

Again, we see a creature who is hard-working and purposeful, providing for herself and her offspring without the need for management or discipline from others.

We can see that God’s creation, when it is ‘busy’, fulfils its purpose and achieves what it is there for. In doing so, these creatures actually give witness to the hand of God; they are not chaotic but going about their business in structured ways.

Human Busyness

Returning to the ways in which we can be busy, we have to admit that we are not always so clear in our efforts. This is not new, people have always been like this.

Jesus spoke about the world at the time of Noah, totally consumed with activity but oblivious to what God wanted from them:



For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away... (Matthew 24:38–39).

Although we know that Noah's society was thoroughly godless, the things Jesus mentions are not wrong in themselves. The issue is that God was being ignored, people were failing to look up from their busy lives to consider what life is really about.

It is important for us to consider this, as Jesus finished his sentence like this: "...so also will the coming of the Son of Man be." He was warning us about being ready for when he returns to set up the Kingdom of God on earth. We do not know when he will come, so the idea is to keep prepared and to be watching the world and ourselves. He continued:

Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect (v44).

Focused Activity

Let's ask ourselves the question – are we busy fools? Do we even keep ourselves busy so that we can avoid the big questions of life? We do not need to, because God has given clear

answers to the fundamental truths we ask about our lives, such as:

- ❖ Why am I doing all this?
- ❖ What's the point of it all?
- ❖ Why am I here?

The Bible tells us the purpose of life:

Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

It tells what things should occupy us, where our priorities should lie:

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (Matthew 6:33).

If we get baptised this is what it says about our new status in God's eyes:

You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9).

We are given the choice: to be busy fools, ignore God and have no hope for the future; or to take the time to read the Bible and have the vital truths about life made clear. Do that and you can live with clarity, purpose and hope.

Editor

editor@gladtidingsmagazine.org

