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Time-Savoring Challenging the Cult of Speed

Susan E. Murray
Andrews University

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FAMILY TIES

Time-Savoring

CHALLENGING THE CULT OF SPEED

BY SUSAN E. MURRAY

Slow me down, Lord. Remind me ... that the race is not always to the swift, that there is more to life than measuring speed. — W.A. Peterson

In this hurry-up and get-everything-done — and more — society, researchers found that American adults actually overestimate the number of hours they work and underestimate the amount of free time they have. While people may have more free time than they realize, most report feelings of what is called “time-famine,” too much to do and not enough time to do it.

Many live life as if it was an emergency: blackberrying while waiting in the ski lift line, paying the bill and calling for a taxi while eating dessert at a restaurant, leaving a sporting event no matter how close the score is to get ahead of the traffic. It seems so clever, so efficient, to do two things or more at once. However, multitasking often means doing two things, or more, not very well.



are not necessarily related to the actual number of free-time hours available. What do you want to do differently? You can choose to consciously appreciate the simpler delights of life as they occur. That’s time-savoring! You can enjoy the taste of good food, the warmth of the sun, the presence of good company, and the delights of fun and silliness in others as well as yourself. Time-savoring moments can be found in

In his book, *In Praise of Slowness*, Carl Honore stated: “In this media-drenched, data-rich, channel-surfing, computer-gaming age, we have lost the art of doing nothing, of shutting out the background noise and distractions, of slowing down and simply being alone with our thoughts. Boredom — the word hardly existed 150 years ago — is a modern invention. Remove all stimulation, and we fidget, panic and look for something, anything, to do to make use of the time” (pg. 11).

So what are we to do? This is our American culture; we have so much to accomplish! We can’t help but be irritated when others are so slow or situations arise that keep us from getting things done!

HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS TO CONSIDER:

Are you living as if your life is an emergency? How is this working for you? Our children are adversely impacted by our negative emotions and reactions to our own frustration of a world filled with so many demands. They are all too often pushed to do more and more themselves.

Recognize that feelings of time-famine, while genuine,

the smaller chunks of free time that perhaps are now being used by chilling out in front of the TV or catching up on the computer.

Of course, we have the Sabbath! But is it the blessing it’s intended to be for you and your family? Why or why not? Could it be a matter of your own perception?

Could the cult of speed be influencing how you approach the Sabbath? How we pace ourselves during the week is directly related to how we spend Sabbath. Is it time to realign some priorities? Could a Sabbath rest include shutting out the background noises and distractions, or simply slowing down and welcoming a time to be alone with God and your thoughts? Could a Sabbath rest also involve more time-savoring (and meal-savoring) times with friends and family? I invite you to think about it, and wish you many blessed Sabbaths!

Susan Murray is a professor emerita of behavioral sciences at Andrews University, and she is a certified family life educator and a licensed marriage and family therapist.