

Quality Time

During the hectic work schedule of the summer months, it always seems that I simply lack the energy to spend quality time with my family. As my thoughts linger on the past day's events and on plans for tomorrow, I find it hard to focus on life outside of work. It takes extra effort to break away from the workaday world and focus on what is truly important in life - family.

Ideally, when I get a day or two off work, I try my best to create some quality time with my wife and children. Summers are short in Northern Michigan, and we all have to make the most efficient use of our schedules. Though I am tempted to improve my golf game (as many of you know I should), going back to the course after 12 or 14 hour days falls pretty low on the priority list. Though all of the windows on my house didn't get painted last summer, the pressure to finish them this summer is not strong enough to make me spend my day off on a ladder with a scraper and a paint brush. And though one or two community obligations beckon me to work, I find comfort in knowing that there are others who can help with the volunteer projects. Priority number one must be my family.

Perhaps I have spread myself too thin and simply can't keep up with all of my extra jobs and duties. I do enjoy my involvement with the golf course, special projects, community and church. But as the great preacher Ecclesiastes writes, "for everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven. . ." (3.1). Knowing the separate time for work, service, play and family offers great peace of mind. In the midst of all the hubbub of summer work and obligations, it is refreshing to know that there is a time just for love and family.

At the beginning of this summer, I planned to restore one window on my house each week until all were scraped, primed, painted and in good working order. Of course I knew that if I missed one week, I could catch up the next week. Now it looks like I'm backed up into 1993, unless we have an unusually mild fall and winter. You see, when your main helper is four years old, and his taste in color is extremely non-traditional (i.e. purple), and his favorite tools are hammer and saw, painting windows takes more time. And this is not to mention the frequent interruptions to swing, eat ice cream, make a bow and arrow, and so on. I look forward to the day when I can play a relaxing game of golf with my daughter (now seven) in the evening learning to play the game of golf, and enjoying the beautiful setting I've worked hard to maintain. But for now, I am happy to spend a free evening sitting down with a stack of books and listening to her read.

There is a time for everything. When it's time for family, other matters become secondary. Making time to go to church or to walk with my wife should come easy. Listening to my daughter play the piano and helping my son with an art project should quickly pre-empt thoughts about work

or committee obligations. Making quality time takes effort, but it becomes easy when I realize that I won't always have a four-year-old to "help" me paint or a seven-year-old to read to me, while at the same time there will always be grass to mow and golf courses to play.

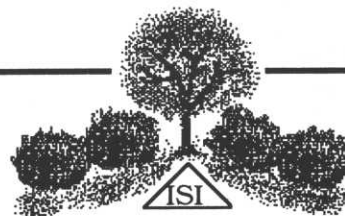
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Crystal Downs Country Club

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