

*For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.”*

*~Ecclesiastes 3:1*

Time is a hot commodity in our lives, in our society, and in our culture. Time is precious- your time is precious. You never seem to have enough time to do all that you want or need to do in the day. So manufacturers have created products for us to use that will save time. We have Minute Rice, fast food drive-thrus, express cleaners, eyeglasses ready for you in under an hour, and turbo high speed internet service. (Do you remember when it would take at least three days to send or receive a letter in the mail? Now it only takes three seconds.) These are all products that are supposed to make our lives less hectic and leave some precious time for our enjoyment. We are a very time conscious and time oriented people. We hang calendars on our kitchen wall, or carry a small notebook planner in our purses, or a Blackberry in our pockets so we can have a schedule and stick to it. We are a very time conscious people who like to plan. And as we look at our calendars we see that one year is about to end and another is about to begin, already we are making plans and putting events and appointments and vacations on our new calendars.

Ecclesiastes 3 tells us about time. It says there is a time for every activity under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest. A time to laugh and a time to cry. A time to grieve and a time to dance. A time to embrace and a time to turn away. A time for war and a time for peace. For everything there is a season, a time for everything under heaven. I think often we read this passage and think of the seasons or times described as events on a calendar or appointments in our Blackberry. We think of these activities as things we can schedule or program into our week; but we all know we can't schedule when someone will be born or die. We can't pencil into our calendars when there will be war and when there will be peace. And we surely can't set a schedule for when we will laugh and dance or when we will cry and grieve.

For many of us this holiday season, we will experience both joys and sorrows. We will experience both tears and laughter. These activities of grieving or dancing, of crying or laughing will come at times that we cannot predict. They will happen at times when we have not scheduled for them to happen. They will happen at times that conflict with our calendars and at times when we least expect them to happen. We may end up crying during the Christmas dinner when everyone else is laughing. Or we may end up laughing during the table grace when everyone else is solemnly praying. These activities will happen at times that may be inconvenient for us. But the scripture tells us that there is a time for every activity under heaven, and God is the one who sets the time. God is the one who invented the seasons. Our emotions might rise up like waves whether they are penciled into our agendas or not. So, may we be open to God's timing and know that no matter what time or season it is, God is there participating with us in our every activity under heaven.

“For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.” This is the time...and it's the right time.