



God's Time Leader Guide

Let us all pray: Heavenly Father, Jesus has paid for my sins and You have promised to always be there. My soul praises You. When times are dark and my way is treacherous, You guide and protect me. I praise You for Your love and faithfulness. Help me share my praise with others so they may also know You as their Lord and Savior. In Jesus' name. Amen.¹

How would you define or describe time? _____ What do we know about it from **Genesis 1:3–5**? _____

Answers will vary, but may include God's creation of light, dark, day and night.

Genesis 1:3-5 ³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Leader: Time — something that cannot be contained. It can be measured in seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, month, years, decades, centuries and even millenniums. It just keeps going and going. Sometimes we don't have enough of it and other times too much. Once gone, we can never get it back. We talk about making up for lost time, but that means cramming the many things that we did not complete into a short period of time. Though sometimes it seems like time flies, an hour is an hour. What we do with it determines how much we accomplish. For example, when recovering from illness or surgery, time doesn't go by quickly enough as we are eager to get back to our regular routines. Other times, we get so involved that we realize suddenly a lot of time has gone by. Always, God is in control.

Reader 1: Sometimes we may be afflicted by a chronic condition — pain that won't go away, or an illness that is hard to cure. We need to be reminded, as did Paul in **2 Corinthians 12:7–10**, *my grace is sufficient for you ...*. Why did Paul need to hear this? _____ **He had a "thorn in the flesh."**

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 ⁷So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

How do we know that it plagued him? _____ **He pleaded three times that it should leave him.**

God's reply was: _____. **"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."**

What was Paul's realization? _____ **It kept him from becoming conceited so that the power of Christ might rest upon him. He understood that when he was weak, he was strong.**

If we think we are strong we may soon depend on ourselves, but when we recognize our weaknesses we also realize our need to depend on Christ, who gives us strength.

All pray: Lord, help me remember that You are leading me each day. Through Your Word and Sacraments, give me the strength I need to accomplish Your purpose. Amen.

Sing: "All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night,"² verse 1

Reader 2: Sometimes we have long periods of time when all goes well. We have a good job, no one in the family is sick, the kids or grandkids are doing well in school, and we begin to rest on our laurels. We begin to think we are successful because of the hard work we have done. Then, suddenly, everything begins to fall apart: a problem to deal with, a difficult situation at work, or strife in the family. Maybe a storm has destroyed our home. We cannot understand: after all, we go to church every Sunday and even attend Bible Class or teach Sunday school. Why is God allowing this to happen?

Then we open our Bibles and find encouragement — and time — mentioned in Jeremiah 29:11: _____

What are the promises of the passages below? Identify the time mentioned or implied.

Answers will vary, but may include the information below.

Romans 8:38–39 time = future and also confidence now

³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Corinthians 4:7–9 time = present

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;

Philippians 4:6–7 _____ time = present → future

⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 10:12–14 _____ time = past → present → future

¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

James 1:2–3 _____ time = present

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

1 Peter 5:6 _____ time = present → future

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,

God has a reason for all that happens in our lives. But His plan isn't always what we had in mind. There are times when the problem may not suddenly go away, but God will show us how to get through it. He will lift us up out of our distress. We must trust in the Lord for all things, for He knows what is best for us.

All pray: Lord, sometimes I let the trials of this world take over my thoughts. I worry too much and forget to trust in You. Please strengthen my faith and remind me that You have plans for me that will not harm me but will be for my good. In Jesus' name. Amen

Sing: Hymn², Verse 5

Reader 3: In the previous meditations we talked about difficult times in our lives and how God has promised to help us through them. But life is not always filled with problems.

In **Ecclesiastes 3:4** we read: _____ .

⁴ a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

God promises us times of rejoicing in **Psalm 30:5b**. _____

^{5b} Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

These can include a graduation from high school or college, when we fell in love and married the man of our dreams, when we gave birth to a child, or when we see our children and grandchildren have happy times. Or there could be solutions to the problems mentioned earlier. God has a purpose for these as well in **Psalm 126:2-3**: _____ .

² Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." ³ The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad.

At such times we must remember to praise God and give Him credit for bringing these joys into our hearts. These are blessings sent from God, not events that just happened to occur. We can rejoice and tell others about all the blessings God has given to us — especially sending His Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins.

All pray: Thank You, heavenly Father, for all the blessings You have given to me. Thank You for all the times You have helped me through difficult situations and the times that You provided favorable solutions to problems that came my way. The blessings You have given me are numerous. Forgive me for the times I did not thank You or give You credit for what You have done for me. Fill my heart with joy and thanksgiving. Help me to live so that others know how great and loving You are and so that all around me may see how You are always in control of my life and will do what is best for me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Sing: Hymn², Verse 4

Leader: *Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!*

It's morning, it's noon, it's evening —

All: **It's the right time to praise God!**

Leader: You're happy, you're sad, you're busy —

All: **It's the right time to praise God!**

Leader: You're a new Christian, you're a lifelong believer, you're a person of godly wisdom —

All: **It's the right time to praise God!**

Leader: Praise God! You made me!

All: *I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made* (Psalm 139:14a).

Leader: Praise God! You redeemed me!

All: *Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine* (Isaiah 43:1b).

Leader: Praise God for Jesus!

All: *My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior* (Luke 1:46b).

Sing Hymn², Verse 2

Pray together Luther's Evening Prayer: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Sing: Hymn², Verse 6

¹ Adapted from Mustard Seed Devotion of September 25, 2018

² "All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night," (LSB #883; LW #484; TLH #558)