

“Is it time to stop Jim?”

*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot...*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 (NIV)

My friend had been battling the disease for several years. Each week I took my turn driving him to Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto for his radiation therapy. This one day, as I watched him painfully limp from the front door of his apartment building to my car, I thought it was now time to ask him the question.

Over the weeks of seeing him slowly degenerate, my heart had ached for him. He had bravely fought to extend his time here with his family. I knew he had been continuing the treatment for the sake of his loved ones. I was determined to have him consider doing something for himself, so once he was settled in the car for the trip to the hospital, I said to him, “Is it time to stop Jim?”

His simple response was, “Yes. I am telling them today there is to be no more radiation. I just want a prescription for pain killers.”

I quietly and quickly agreed

with him that he was making a wise choice. His treatments were only extending the suffering from the disease and the side effects of the treatment added their own forms of torment. Then I quoted our verse for today. I was concerned for the mental and emotional stability of my friend as he endured such suffering.

When people have such a bleak future in a losing battle with cancer, the family needs to rally around the person and urge them to let go of life here, and reach out for the glorious future waiting the children of God in heaven.

Sadly, I have witnessed families urging their loved one to battle on and fight the powerful enemy of death to the last. These same people sometimes then discuss privately with me the detail of the funeral they know is only weeks away. Sometimes it's their own fear of death that causes them to push their loved to go on in a losing cause.

We need to give permission to our loved one in such a situation to let go of this world that they soon must leave anyway. People in such circumstances need guidance on how to prepare their soul for entrance to heaven. Some of the great death scenes of the Bible such as Acts 7:55-56, John 19:17-30 shine a light on this often too dark a subject.

If you or your loved one is struggling to find sense and purpose in such a challenging time, look again at our verse and see that there is a time to come into this world and there is also a time to leave. May you, or your loved one, who walks this difficult road find grace to walk it well and to the glory of God. Even in death the Lord will be with you. Take His hand in yours and walk on in the light of faith to the place of endless day, joy and bliss.

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