

Be Faithful in Season or Out

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. —2 Timothy 4:2

If we collapse the moment the Lord withdraws His special presence, it suggests we haven't learned much. Whereas we dare not proceed without Him, sometimes we have no choice but to get on with our calling and make the most of the situation.

I try to spend a certain amount of time every day in quiet before the Lord. In the perfect world I will feel His presence, read His Word with full assurance of understanding, and go out to do my job with great confidence. But it isn't always like that. In fact, it is not very often that I feel a great sense of God in my quiet time.

It is "in season" when God's special presence is felt; "out of season" is when He chooses to stay behind—to see if we will put into the practice the things we learned in His presence.

It takes greater faith and devotion to pray, trust, and obey when God is absent than when He is present. I suspect we please God more by being faithful "out of season" than by being faithful "in season." More faith is required "out of season."

There is a sense in which we can get emotionally tied to the Lord in an unhealthy manner. Jesus sent out the Twelve (Matt. 10:5-15). Later He sent out seventy-two others, during which He was not personally at hand for those who went out (Luke 10:1-12). They needed to be on their own, as it were, to put into practice what they had learned from Jesus.

The special anointing of the Spirit is much the same. I am required to carry on whether or not I feel Him present. If I didn't carry on, I would never go out much at all. I would

also be demonstrating that I had not learned much from His presence and His Word at all.

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