

I know I have to work on that!

Haste is an enemy. It puts us under stress, raises our blood pressure, makes us impatient, renders us more vulnerable to accidents and, most seriously of all, blinds us to the needs of others. Haste is normally not a virtue, no matter what the goodness is of the thing towards which we are hurrying. Haste and hurry, perhaps more than anything else, prevent us from being good Samaritans.

We know this from our own experience. Our struggle to give proper time to family, prayer, and helping others has mainly to do with time. We're invariably too busy, too pressured, too hurried, too-driven, to stop and help. A friend of mine confesses that when she comes to die what she will regret most about her life is not the times she broke a commandment, but the many times she stepped over her own children on her way to get some "not that important" chore done. Along similar lines, we tend to blame our American culture for so much of the breakdown of the family in our society today when, in fact, perhaps the biggest strain of all on the family is the pressure that comes from the workplace that has us under constant pressure, forever in a hurry, and daily stepping over our children because of the pressures of work.

I know this all too well, of course, from my own experience. I feel forever pressured, forever in a hurry, forever over-extended, and forever stepping over all kinds of things that call for my attention. As a priest, I can rationalize this by pointing to the importance of the ministry. Ministry is meant to conscript us beyond our own agenda, but deeper down, I know that much of this is a rationalization. Sometimes, too, I rationalize my busyness and hurry by taking consolation in the fact that I came to be this way legitimately. It's in my genes. Both my father and my mother exhibited a similar struggle.

Indeed, the dangers of haste and hurry are already written into the very first pages of the Bible where God invites us to make sure to keep holy the Sabbath. When we are in a hurry we see little beyond our own agenda.

The positive side to haste and hurry (and there is one), haste and hurry can help make for a productive individual who is affirmed and admired for what he does. I know this too: I get a lot of affirmation for my work, even as I have to admit that pressure and hurry have been a stumbling block from my being a Good Samaritan. *Haste makes waste*, so goes the saying. It also makes for a spiritual and a human blindness that can severely limit our compassion. *I know I have to work on that!*

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