

A SIX-SESSION READING & REFLECTION GUIDE

BEFORE SUNSET

How to Be Anxiously Engaged in a Good Cause



BOOK CLUB KIT

Time • Purpose • Planning • Patience

Based on the book by Michael D. Young

A Conversation About the Time We Have



Before Sunset combines scripture, biography, personal experience, and practical counsel to ask a deceptively simple question: What are we doing with the time entrusted to us? This kit is designed for book clubs, families, youth and adult groups, and individual reflection.

The central tension

Faithful living requires both movement and waiting: act on what matters now, yet trust God when the right outcome cannot be hurried.

How to use the guide

- Plan 60-75 minutes for each gathering and assign the listed chapters beforehand.
- Begin with a two-minute quiet inventory: Where did your time go this week? No guilt, just observation.
- Discuss principles before prescribing routines. Different seasons of life carry different demands.
- Treat health, disability, caregiving, grief, unemployment, and waiting as real constraints - not failures of willpower.
- End each meeting with one small, specific experiment for the coming week.

A note on tone

The manuscript often addresses young readers directly and uses humor, warning, and exhortation. A strong discussion will make room for both urgency and grace. The goal is not to measure whose calendar looks busiest, but to ask whether our choices reflect our deepest commitments.

Suggested materials

The book • a timer • pens • printed worksheets from this kit • optional scriptures or hymnbook

Six Gatherings Before Sunset



The sequence moves from purpose and priority through procrastination, stewardship, planning, patience, and renewed commitment.

#	THEME	READ	FOCUS
1	The day before	Chs. 1-2	Time, virtue, priorities, examples of engaged lives
2	Today, not someday	Ch. 3	Procrastination, preparation, repentance, readiness
3	The currency of time	Chs. 4-5	Learning, talents, media, overlooked minutes
4	Build the tower	Ch. 6	Goals, small steps, planning, inspired adjustment
5	Wait upon the Lord	Ch. 7	Timing, agency, adversity, promises, patience
6	The night after	Ch. 8	Course corrections, endurance, hope, stewardship

A simple meeting rhythm

5 min

Quiet inventory and opening thought

15 min

Key idea from the assigned reading

25 min

Three or four discussion questions

15 min

Worksheet, case study, or group activity

10 min

Choose one experiment and close

The Day Before: What Comes First?



READ BEFORE MEETING	OPENING PRACTICE
Chapters 1-2	Name one activity that garnished an ordinary part of your week with faith, service, learning, or gratitude.

The opening chapters treat time as preparation rather than mere scheduling. Nephi's 'go and do' response becomes a model of engaged discipleship, while Alma the Younger, Nephi son of Helaman, Dallin H. Oaks, Joseph Smith, and Jesus Christ illustrate different forms of purposeful action.

Discuss

1. What changes when we think of virtue as something that can garnish ordinary activities rather than replace them?
2. How does the manuscript distinguish wholesome recreation from idleness? Is that distinction always clear?
3. Which example of an 'engaged life' most challenged your assumptions about busyness, service, or success?
4. Why is 'seek first' a stronger principle than trying to fit every good thing into a day?
5. What can Christ's willingness to stop for one person teach us about efficiency and love?

Group activity: the priority test

Choose before you schedule

List five good uses of two free hours. As a group, decide what additional information you would need before calling any option the best use: promises already made, another person's need, health, spiritual prompting, rest, or long-term purpose.

Weekly experiment: Put one kingdom-seeking action first on one ordinary day. Notice what it changes downstream.

Today, Not Someday



READ BEFORE MEETING	OPENING PRACTICE
Chapter 3	Think of a harmless-looking delay that became harder with time. What made the task grow?

The manuscript compares procrastination to time debt: it appears to preserve freedom while quietly reducing future choices. Through the kitchen-sink analogy, scriptural warnings, and examples of unprepared people, the chapter insists that small delays can harden into difficult consequences.

Discuss

1. Why does the kitchen-sink analogy work so well? Where does it break down?
2. How is procrastination different from rest, incubation, waiting for information, or respecting the right timing?
3. Which scriptural example - the foolish builder, Noah's neighbors, Eli, Jonah, or the ten virgins - offers the most useful diagnosis of delay?
4. The chapter connects preparation with the Second Coming. How can that urgency inspire action without producing fear?
5. What is one task whose emotional weight is now larger than the task itself? What would a ten-minute beginning look like?

Case study

Delay or discernment?

A person has postponed a difficult conversation for three weeks. Identify evidence for four possible explanations: avoidance, mercy, lack of readiness, or wise timing. What is the smallest honest next step under each explanation?

Weekly experiment: Choose one 'sticky pan' and act on it for ten focused minutes today.

The Currency of Time



READ BEFORE MEETING	OPENING PRACTICE
Chapters 4-5	Estimate yesterday's discretionary minutes. Where did they hide - transitions, waiting, scrolling, commuting, or television?

These chapters ask what we are purchasing with our hours. Knowledge, character, relationships, service, and talents can outlast possessions. 'Undercover minutes' - small fragments hidden inside ordinary days - become a practical way to invest without pretending everyone has equal free time.

Discuss

1. What does the metaphor of time as currency clarify? What might it obscure about grace, rest, or unequal circumstances?
2. How can spiritual and secular learning strengthen rather than compete with each other?
3. Which 'undercover minutes' are genuinely available to you, and which are better left as mental rest?
4. How should a person decide whether media is recreation, connection, learning, avoidance, or habit?
5. The manuscript argues that small efforts accumulate. What skill or relationship in your life proves that principle?

Minute-market activity

Spend twelve minutes

Each person receives an imaginary twelve-minute block. Choose one investment: learn, create, serve, connect, restore, prepare, or play. Explain why that category is the wisest purchase for your present season.

Weekly experiment: Prepare one portable, meaningful activity for a predictable wait - and give yourself permission not to use it if rest is what you need.

Build the Tower One Brick at a Time



READ BEFORE MEETING	OPENING PRACTICE
Chapter 6	Name a project that once felt impossibly large. What was, or could have been, its first brick?

A bucket of building bricks becomes the chapter's central image: life offers many pieces, but meaning requires a design and consistent construction. The author connects daily goals, architectural planning, Oliver Cowdery's need to 'study it out,' and Nephi's inspired shipbuilding.

Discuss

1. How does a small daily goal protect a worthy project from both hopelessness and burnout?
2. What is the difference between a goal, a plan, a habit, and a schedule? Which does the manuscript emphasize most?
3. Why is planning described as a 'spiritual creation'?
4. What does Oliver Cowdery's experience suggest about the relationship between thought, prayer, and revelation?
5. How can we tell whether a failed plan needs more discipline, a smaller step, new information, or inspired redirection?

Blueprint activity

Draw the next floor

Choose one meaningful goal. Write the desired outcome, one repeating action, one likely obstacle, one source of help, and the next review date. Keep the plan small enough to survive a difficult week.

Weekly experiment: Place one brick daily. Track completion, not intensity.

Faith Includes Faith in His Timing



READ BEFORE MEETING	OPENING PRACTICE
Chapter 7	Silently name one good outcome you cannot force. What faithful action remains available while you wait?

The chapter turns from managing time to being managed by time. Esther, Nephi, Enos, Abraham, Joseph Smith, Joshua, and the author's own family experiences reveal that some promises require long preparation, other people's agency, or circumstances visible only in retrospect.

Discuss

1. Why can a 'not yet' answer be harder than either yes or no?
2. Which example of patient waiting in the chapter feels most transferable to ordinary life?
3. How does the account of the author's unemployment and Bryson's medical care complicate the meaning of a setback?
4. Where is the boundary between faithful patience and passive resignation?
5. How should we speak about divine timing when another person's suffering has not resolved neatly?

Discernment practice

Act / prepare / release

For one unresolved situation, identify: (1) an action that is yours to take, (2) preparation you can continue, and (3) an outcome you must release because it belongs to God, time, or another person's agency.

Weekly experiment: Replace one demand for an immediate result with a faithful next action.

Never Stand Still Till the Master Appears



READ BEFORE MEETING	OPENING PRACTICE
Chapter 8	Look back at the previous five sessions. Which one-degree course correction would matter most if sustained?

The conclusion turns from warning to anticipation. 'Come, Let Us Anew' gathers the book's ideas into movement, hope, patient labor, and enduring love. Stories of a railroad switch and an aircraft off course show how tiny directional choices can produce distant destinations.

Discuss

1. How does the Christmas-Eve image change the emotional tone of preparing for the future?
2. What does the hymn 'Come, Let Us Anew' add that a list of time-management principles cannot?
3. Are small deviations always dangerous? When can a small change become a saving correction?
4. Which recurring scriptural figure - builder, steward, traveler, servant, watchman, or disciple - best expresses the book's message for you?
5. What would it mean to finish the work you were given without comparing it to someone else's work?

Closing activity

Anew

Write one sentence beginning, 'Before sunset, I want to have...' Then turn it into a gentle direction for the next seven days, not a verdict on your life.

Optional close: read or sing 'Come, Let Us Anew,' then sit in silence for one minute.

Questions for a One-Night Book Club



Use these when the group has read the whole book or when you want to extend one of the six sessions.

1. Is the book primarily about productivity, discipleship, preparation, or desire? Defend your reading.
2. Which metaphor - sunset, currency, debt, hidden minutes, bricks, blueprint, journey, cookie, or course correction - carries the most truth?
3. Where does the manuscript most effectively use humor to make a serious principle memorable?
4. How does the intended young audience shape the examples and tone?
5. Which counsel changes when applied to a caregiver, a student, a retiree, or a person with chronic illness?
6. Can an apparently unproductive hour be spiritually fruitful? Give an example.
7. Which kind of preparation creates peace, and which kind can become anxious control?
8. What is the relationship between talent development and service?
9. How can Sabbath limits create freedom rather than deprivation?
10. When have you recognized providence only in retrospect?
11. What role does another person's agency play in the timing of our hopes?
12. Which scriptural life in the book deserves a fuller or more complicated reading?
13. What practice from the manuscript would most improve a family culture?
14. How might the advice on media be updated for today's always-connected environment?
15. What is one sentence of counsel you would offer your younger self about time?



The Stewardship of Time

The book's counsel becomes clearer when urgency and patience are held together. Use this map to locate the kind of wisdom a situation requires.

LENS	QUESTION	PRACTICE
PURPOSE	What matters most?	Seek first • identify the work • remember the destination
PRIORITY	What comes before what?	Choose among good things • honor promises • protect essentials
ACTION	What can I do now?	Begin today • use a hidden minute • serve • place one brick
PLANNING	How will I continue?	Study it out • count the cost • create a repeatable step
PATIENCE	What cannot be hurried?	Wait with courage • respect agency • keep preparing
TRUST	What outcome is not mine?	Receive redirection • release control • endure in hope
REVIEW	Am I still on course?	Notice small deviations • correct gently • begin anew

Reflection

Which lens do you overuse? Which one do you neglect?



A Compassionate Time Audit

This is an observation exercise, not a scorecard. Record one typical day in broad blocks, then notice patterns without shaming yourself.

TIME / BLOCK	WHAT I DID	WHAT IT GAVE OR COST	KEEP / CHANGE
Morning			
Midday			
Afternoon			
Evening			
Transitions			
Unplanned time			

Notice

One activity that restored me:

One activity that aligned with a deep priority:

One hidden minute I could use differently:

One demand I may need help, permission, or grace to carry:

Seek First: A Weekly Priority Planner



Start with commitments and values, not an overfilled task list. Leave deliberate margin for people, rest, and redirection.

My first priorities

Faith, relationships, health, service, learning, or responsibilities that must shape the week.

Promises already made

People, deadlines, meetings, caregiving, worship, and work I have committed to honor.

One meaningful build

A project or talent that deserves a small repeatable step.

Rest and wholesome recreation

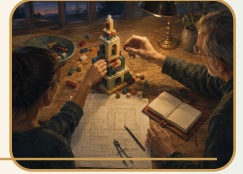
What will genuinely restore connection, joy, attention, or physical capacity?

Margin for the unexpected

What can move, shrink, or be released if another person needs me or circumstances change?

One sentence for the week

One Brick at a Time



Turn a worthy ambition into a plan that can survive ordinary life. Small does not mean unimportant; it means repeatable.

1. THE TOWER

What meaningful outcome am I trying to build?

2. THE WHY

Whom will it bless, and why does it matter?

3. THE BRICK

What action can I repeat in 5-20 minutes?

4. THE PLACE

When and where will that action happen?

5. THE SUPPORT

Who, what tool, or what prayer will help?

6. THE REVIEW

When will I adjust the plan without abandoning the purpose?

A difficult-week version

What is the smallest version that still keeps faith with the goal?

The Ten-Minute Procrastination Reset



Use this when delay has made a task feel heavier than it is. The goal is honest movement, not instant completion.

Name it

What exactly am I avoiding?

Diagnose it

Is the barrier confusion, fear, resentment, perfectionism, fatigue, missing information, or wrong timing?

Shrink it

What can be done in ten minutes or less?

Prepare it

What file, tool, person, place, or decision is needed?

Start it

Set a timer. Work only until it rings; continuing is optional.

Close the loop

Schedule the next step, ask for help, or consciously decide to stop.

After ten minutes

Faithful Waiting: Act, Prepare, Release



Patience is not inactivity. It is disciplined hope about outcomes that cannot be forced.

ACT	PREPARE	RELEASE
What is mine to do now?	What can I learn, practice, repair, save, or become ready for?	What belongs to God's timing, another person's agency, or circumstances beyond my control?

Language for the waiting season

Complete one sentence: 'While I cannot make _____ happen, I can faithfully _____.'

Facilitator caution

Do not use divine timing to explain another person's pain for them. Offer presence, practical help, and humility before interpretation.

Keep the Conversation Purposeful and Kind



The subject of time can easily trigger guilt, comparison, or unsolicited advice. A good facilitator protects honest reflection and practical hope.

Invite, do not interrogate

Let participants pass on personal questions. Waiting, health, money, family, and spiritual uncertainty can be tender.

Separate worth from output

Do not equate a full schedule with righteousness or a slow season with failure.

Ask before advising

Try: 'Would you like ideas, help, or simply someone to listen?'

Make room for unequal time

Caregiving, disability, employment, transportation, and financial security change what is available.

Pair urgency with grace

If the group names a needed change, help make the next step smaller and more specific.

Close with agency

Each person chooses an experiment; the group does not assign one.

Helpful follow-up questions

- What makes that important to you?
- What is the smallest honest next step?
- What would patience look like here?
- What support would make the plan realistic?
- What might you release?

Before the Light Fades



Use this ten-minute close after the final meeting or as a personal reflection.

1 • ARRIVE

Sit quietly for one minute. Notice the day you have actually lived, not the day you wish you had lived.

2 • REMEMBER

Name one person, truth, relationship, talent, or act of service that deserves your remaining attention.

3 • CHOOSE

Write one small action for today and one outcome you will patiently release.

4 • BEGIN ANEW

Read or sing 'Come, Let Us Anew.' Listen for the union of hope, patience, work, and love.

A closing blessing

May your time be guided by what matters most.
 May your plans be diligent and flexible.
 May your hidden minutes gather into good work.
 May your waiting deepen rather than diminish hope.
 And when a day goes differently than intended,
 may you have the courage to begin anew.

Final reflection

Before sunset, what do you want to have given, learned, built, repaired, enjoyed, or become?

Prepared from Before Sunset: How to Be Anxiously Engaged in a Good Cause by Michael D. Young. Scripture and hymn references are identified in the manuscript.