

## **Do It Tomorrow – and Other Secrets of Time Management**

Mark Forster (Hodder & Stoughton, 2006)

Another book on time management! If *Getting Things Done* (reviewed a few months ago) was not quite your style, perhaps this book might be. Like David Allen, Forster is also responding to the tyranny of our 'do-it-now' email-driven culture. He aims to help readers to use their time effectively and achieve their goals within a realistic deadline – leaving 'time to play'.

Why do we have a problem with time? As Christians we believe that God gives us enough time to do all the things we are supposed to do – but working that out is usually another matter! On a practical level, Forster suggests that there are only three possible reasons we are short of time:

- We are working inefficiently
- We have too much to do
- We have too little time to do it in

Spending time with God and exploring our gifts and our calling may help with the second of these. What is God calling us to do? What is he calling us *not* to do? We may need to learn better skills of delegation, or learn to say 'No.' If our problem is inefficiency, then this book may help. But we must beware the danger of becoming more efficient and then taking on more, which can easily lead to becoming even more overwhelmed.

'Do it tomorrow' is not a 'manyana' philosophy: put it off until tomorrow – and never do it. The 'do it tomorrow' technique is at the heart of this book. Forster argues that we all start off with a plan for our day, but are quickly derailed by the emails and 'urgent' tasks which easily encroach. 'Doing it tomorrow' means making a list today of all the things we plan to do tomorrow – and then doing it!

Like most books on this kind of subject, this one is based on a series of principles, such as: having a clear vision, one thing at a time, little and often, and closed lists. The advantage of a closed list over a conventional to-do list is that as nothing new can be added, therefore it tends to get smaller, it's relatively to clear, and it is more motivating.

This book is easy to read, well laid out and has plenty of accessible examples, as well as a short summary of what to do to get more organised. Some of the ideas are easy to implement: to save up emails, phone calls, paper and tasks in batches, and deal with them all together. Or to start each day by dealing with a 'current initiative' – in a church context this could be sermon planning, service or meeting preparation, forward planning: the things which easily get pushed out by the 'urgent' demands of people. Or to stop breaking off from what you are doing every time a new email comes in.

If you have too much to do, this book will not solve all your problems; but it could well point you to ways of working more effectively, and remind you of the bigger issues which you need to address.

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