Read the following excerpt of a talk by Elder Dallin H. Oaks (Ensign, October 2003)

**Timing**

…My first point on the subject of timing is that the Lord has His own timetable. “My words are sure and shall not fail,” the Lord taught the early elders of this dispensation. “But,” He continued, “all things must come to pass in their time” ([D&C 64:31–32](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/64.31-32?lang=eng#p31)).

The first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith means trust—trust in God’s will, trust in His way of doing things, and trust in His timetable. We should not try to impose our timetable on His. As Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said:

“The issue for us is trusting God enough to trust also His timing. If we can truly believe He has our welfare at heart, may we not let His plans unfold as He thinks best? The same is true with the second coming and with all those matters wherein our faith needs to include faith in the Lord’s timing for us personally, not just in His overall plans and purposes.”[1](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/#note1)

Indeed, we cannot have true faith in the Lord without also having complete trust in the Lord’s will and in the Lord’s timing.

In our service in the Lord’s Church we should remember that when is just as important as *who, what, where,* and *how.*

For a vivid illustration of the importance of timing, we can look to the earthly ministry of the Lord and His succeeding instructions to His Apostles. During His lifetime the Lord instructed the Twelve Apostles not to preach to the Gentiles but “rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” ([Matt. 10:6](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/nt/matt/10.6?lang=eng#p6); see also [Matt. 10:5](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/nt/matt/10.5?lang=eng#p5); [Matt. 15:22–26](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/nt/matt/15.22-26?lang=eng#p22)). Then, at the appropriate time, this instruction was reversed in a great revelation to the Apostle Peter. Only then, at the precise time dictated by the Lord, was the gospel taken to the Gentiles (see [Acts 10–11](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/nt/acts/10?lang=eng)).

As this example shows, continuing revelation is the means by which the Lord administers His timing. We need that revelatory direction. For example, many of us or our descendants will doubtless participate in the fulfillment of prophecies about the building of the city of New Jerusalem (see [D&C 84:2–4](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/84.2-4?lang=eng#p2)). But in this matter the timing is the Lord’s, not ours. We will not be approved or blessed in clearing the ground or pouring the footings for that great project until the Lord has said that it is time. In this, as in so many other things, the Lord will proceed in His own time and in His own way.

We prepare in the way the Lord has directed. We hold ourselves in readiness to act on the Lord’s timing. He will tell us when the time is right to take the next step. For now, we simply concentrate on our own assignments and on what we have been asked to do today. In this we are also mindful of the Lord’s assurance: “I will hasten my work in its time” ([D&C 88:73](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/88.73?lang=eng#p73)).

People who do not accept continuing revelation sometimes get into trouble by doing things too soon or too late or too long. The practice of plural marriage is an example.

The importance of the Lord’s timing is also evident in His dietary laws. The Lord gave one dietary direction to ancient Israel. Much later, because of the “evils and designs” that exist in these “last days” (see [D&C 89:4](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/89.4?lang=eng#p4)), He has given us a Word of Wisdom suited to the circumstances of our time, accompanied by the promised blessings we need in our time.

The Lord’s timing also applies to the important events of our personal lives. A great scripture in the Doctrine and Covenants declares that a particular spiritual experience will come to us “in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will” ([D&C 88:68](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/88.68?lang=eng#p68)). This principle applies to revelation[2](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/#note2) and to all of the most important events in our lives: birth, marriage, death, and even our moves from place to place.