

## John Winthrop on Tardiness

When John Winthrop arrived at Salem in 1630, he found the colonists of the Massachusetts Bay Company in a pitiful state. They were ragged, weak, and apathetic. As he looked upon them, he could see the light had gone out of their eyes. The acting governor soon informed Winthrop that they had lost nearly two hundred of their original number. The remaining colonists were tired and dejected, and hardly any work was getting done.

Winthrop knew something must be done, and quickly. He called all the colonists together and informed them that they would ALL be lending a hand in getting things back in order. While he was delegating responsibilities, a genteelly dressed dandy with a ruffled collar arrived late to the speech. A few moments passed, and then Winthrop informed this gentleman that he, too, would have to work with his hands and help the cause. The man was aghast; he felt himself above menial labor. He had brought nine men with him to do any manual labor that his comfort required.

Winthrop then turned his attention to the others who were late to the meeting. He said that it was not merely inconsiderate to be tardy but that it was a sin against God! “This is His work, and He has called us to it. To steal His time is to blaspheme what He is trying to accomplish here!” he informed them. Those who were late plainly got the message that to be tardy was to rob God.

Do the people who traipse in late to church service after service realize what they are guilty of? When we gather together and start church, it is God’s time. To carelessly waltz in without any regard for established time is truly a great disrespect. I wonder if they would be so negligent if we informed them that they were robbing God of his time. It might just instill a conviction in the chronically tardy and help them reform.

He’s an on-time God; yes, he is. Should we be otherwise?

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