

Is This Meeting Necessary?

Written by Steve Marr
Wednesday, 29 July 2020 22:10

Many of us are bombarded with requests for meetings, many from people we don't know very well. The meetings probably won't be productive, at least from our viewpoint.

Nehemiah encountered this circumstance and he responded with this reply: "I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?" (Nehemiah 6:3, NIV) Four times messengers brought the same mess and four times Nehemiah gave the same answer, he couldn't come. (Nehemiah 6:4 NIV)

Meetings take time. They take time for preparation, time to conduct and in some instances time for follow-up. I consistently remind myself that when I say *yes* to a meeting, I'm saying *no* to another work commitment.

Today for example, somebody asked me for a phone meeting to talk about new software, software I'm not interested in. The person started to push, and I terminated the conversation as politely as possible. I didn't have time for a 30-minute presentation that provided little benefit to my business. I understand the person is paid based on the number of appointments they set up. However, I don't want to be a statistic which helps the other person but wastes my time.

One tactic I use is to ask the person to tell me their unique sales proposition and the benefits of their organization in three minutes. If they can't do this in three minutes, spending more time in a meeting isn't worthwhile. I politely explain that the product or service is not for me and I need to move on.

When I take introductory appointments for consulting, I offer a free consulting session to determine from the client's perspective and mine if moving forward is worth our time and money. These meetings are not a waste of time. Instead, they save time in the long run.

Some meetings present a ministry opportunity and need to be handled carefully and sensitively.

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When I perceive there is a ministry opportunity, I ask the Lord if this is a connection that He wants me to make. When in doubt, I schedule the appointment because I don't want to miss an opportunity that the Lord may be placing in my path.

This is one of the reasons that I advocate a telephone interview as a first step when hiring staff. If I start with an in-person interview where I can tell in the first 90 seconds that there is no possibility of hiring this person, we've both wasted time. A phone interview can save a lot of time. It also provides the groundwork to tell whether another meeting would be fruitful or not.

Accept meetings carefully. Make sure there is not another way to accomplish your purpose. When you treat your time and theirs as important, everyone wins.