

Time Well Spent

By David Dickson
Church Magazines

Because Pele Mika Ah Lam makes the most of her time, she finds happiness daily, she owns a small business, and she can look back without regret.

Island time in the Pacific runs a bit differently than it does in many other parts of the world. Daily tasks are completed by the position of the sun, not the clock. You wake to the sounds of birds and the crashing of waves, not to a shrill alarm.

For Pele Mika Ah Lam of Samoa, there's another important consideration about time that she lives by: "I make the most of it wherever I am."

Learning in and out of Class

Pele grew up in a village where families—including her own—live off the land. Running water and electricity are never a given, and the homes are simple and beautiful. Education is not easy to pay for. "Our whole family helps support each other with education costs," Pele says. "It's the Samoan way."

After working hard and getting top marks in school, Pele was accepted to attend the National University of

Samoa. She chose to study accounting, mathematics, and computing. She also made room in her schedule for institute classes.

Along the way, Pele participated in another activity that would change her life in the near future, though she didn't realize it at the time. For fun, every Friday evening she met with other Church members attending the university to discuss the gospel and learn new skills. These activities varied from week to week with one exception: on the last Friday of each month, they had a standing tradition of learning how to cook a different meal.

"I paid close attention," Pele says. "I didn't want to waste a chance to learn something new."

That decision would yield big dividends in the future.

A Door Closes, a Window Opens

The cost of a university education can be a major obstacle to nearly anyone. For Pele, when her funding

ran out, she had to leave school. She had worked hard, however, and learned all she could while there—including how to cook many different meals.

As a wife and as a mother of young children, she thought hard about how she might use what she had learned to help support her family. Throughout her life, Pele has been taught to believe in God and to work hard.

"I decided to start my own business," she says. "I now run a barbecue and salad stand, cooking food that I learned how to make while going through school!"

Because of her business success, Pele makes enough money to take care of her immediate family, as well as help care for her parents and siblings.

"Our family believes that 'faith without works is dead' [James 2:20]," she says. "We have faith in God and believe that He will help us in every way. But we have to do our part."

Island Time

Pele still lives life on “island time.” She rises and retires with the sun and embraces the simple, peaceful Samoan lifestyle. And she understands and lives the following truth: “Time flies on wings of lightning; we cannot call it back.”¹

Elder Ian S. Ardern of the Seventy has taught: “Time is never for sale; time is a commodity that cannot, try as you may, be bought at any store for any price. Yet when time is wisely

used, its value is immeasurable.”²

Because Pele is trying to make the most of the time she has, God has prospered her and her family, and they have found joy even in the midst of challenges. She has a strong testimony, a successful business, and a bright future.

“We are very blessed,” she says. ■

NOTES

1. “Improve the Shining Moments,” *Hymns*, no. 226.
2. Ian S. Ardern, “A Time to Prepare,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 31.

A FIVE-STEP PLAN FOR TIME MANAGEMENT

If you’re looking for ways to balance your busy schedule, consider the following five steps from *My Foundation for Self-Reliance*:

1. *List tasks.* “Each morning, make a list of tasks to do. Add names of people to serve.”
2. *Pray for guidance.* “Listen. Commit to do your best.”
3. *Number your priorities.* “Put a 1 by the most important, a 2 by the next most important, and so on.”
4. *Set goals and act.* “Listen to the Spirit. Set goals. Work hard. Start with the most important task and work down the list.”
5. *Report.* “Each night, report to Heavenly Father in prayer. Ask questions. Listen. Repent. Feel His love.”¹

NOTE

1. From *My Foundation for Self-Reliance* (2016), 14.

