

## **RABBI'S MESSAGE**

### **A Time for Everything**

According to Book of Ecclesiastes:

*Everything has its season and there is a time for everything under heaven.*

*A time to be born and a time to die;*

*A time to plant and a time to uproot what was planted.*

*A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to weep and a time to laugh.*

*A time to wail and a time to dance. A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones.*

*A time to embrace and a time to shun embraces; a time to seek and a time to lose.*

*A time to keep and a time to discard; a time to rend and a time to mend.*

*A time to be silent and a time to speak. A time to love and a time to hate.*

*A time for war and a time for peace.*

This poetic, biblical passage was made musically famous when folk artist Pete Seeger put it to music and The Byrds performed it. It offers a powerful list of opposites, each statement a compelling lesson. When I approach the end of the passage, I pause to affirm to myself, “a time to keep silent and a time to speak.” Anyone who knows me knows that words are a major component of my essence. I use words for just about everything: teaching, relationships, communicating, storytelling and sermonizing. I use words to express my thoughts, both verbally and in writing. Many would suggest that I’ve focused on “the time to speak” more passionately than “the time to keep silent.”

I found myself interested in the order of the writing. The biblical Hebrew lists silence before speaking. Perhaps this is a reminder that, in silence, we can contemplate what we will say. At the same time, I expect the implication is that there are times when it is more appropriate to stay silent than it is to speak. Some statistics have validated that more than 50% of a message is often communicated non-verbally. Texts and email...they’re just *words*. Eye contact, facial expression, gestures and attitude communicate our real feelings. I recently met someone who, because of a surgical procedure, could not speak at all. However, her expression told me a very full story. I did not understand specifics; I did understand a soulful journey. As we prepare to embrace a New Year, I look forward to hearing your silence and your speech, and sharing mine with you.

L’shalom,

*Rabbi Dan Gordon*

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