

Lesson in Prayer: w/c 16th Oct 2017
Well Street Church House Group notes

At the home of Martha and Mary (Luke 10 – 38-41)

³⁸ As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!'

⁴¹ 'Martha, Martha,' the Lord answered, 'you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but few things are needed – or indeed only one.^[f] Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.'

Introduction

Opening Prayer – "Lord, teach us to pray"

1.) Share something about your prayer life with the group. How easy or difficult do you find it to pray?

Richard Foster says this in his book Prayer, Finding the Heart's true Home

"For too long we have been in a far country: a country of noise and hurry and crowds, a country of climb and push and shove, a country of frustration and fear and intimidation. And he welcomes us home: home to serenity and peace and joy, home to friendship and fellowship and openness, home to intimacy and acceptance and affirmation."

2.) Do you agree with the first part of this statement? Why or why not?

3.) Do you feel "at home" when you come to God in prayer, or does it sometimes feel distant, awkward

From the passage in Luke (and the ones in John 11: 1-43, and John 12: 1-10 – Read these together if you wish)

4.) In character or temperament, ask the group if they identify more with Mary or with Martha?

5.) How easy do we find it to sit "at the feet of Jesus" when there is so much to do?

In John 11.35, we read that Jesus wept. Some question whether he was weeping over the death of Lazarus, or because of the emotion expressed by Mary, or because of the lack of faith and understanding and understanding of the disciples or because of the realisation that his own confrontation with death was growing imminent.

6.) Why do you think Jesus wept?

7.) What breaks the heart of God today?

Richard foster says the secret to prayer "is not about gritting your teeth, but about falling in love"

Dom Chapman writes: "pray as you can, not as you cant"

8.) What one thing might you try to develop your prayer life and draw closer to God?

Finally, encourage the group to have a time of prayer for one another and to share prayer requests for the coming week. Invite the group to consider personal thanks, needs and wants rather than simply praying for others (though that would be good too!

9.) Is there one thing you would like to give thanks for tonight? And what would you like to ask God for?

Optional – discussion on the Lord’s prayer:

Luke 11: 1-4 NIV

Jesus’ teaching on prayer

1 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.’

2 He said to them, ‘When you pray, say:

“‘Father,^[a]
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.^[b]

3 Give us each day our daily bread.

4 Forgive us our sins,
for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.^[c]
And lead us not into temptation.”

Here is the passage on the lord’s prayer which follows the episode of Mary and Martha. Probably neither of these versions is the same as the one we are most familiar with

10.) Which version of the Lord’s prayer do you prefer to pray and why?

11.) How much does it matter? Should we pray the words or pray and live according to the meaning?

Optional Prayer to finish

A Mary prayer for a Martha world (Scotty Smith)

Dear Lord Jesus, first of all, thank you for being so welcoming and desirous of our fellowship, just as you were of Mary. Not only do we have access to your throne of grace 24/7, it’s you who greets us there. We’re never a bother to you; we’re never “put on hold”; we never have to “take a number and wait.” We’ll never meet a tired and frustrated you, because you’re always the Bridegroom who delights in his Bride—rejoicing over us with singing, giving us new mercy every day and sufficient grace for every circumstance. Hallelujah, many times over. We’re the ones who get tired and frustrated. We live in a “Martha world” of many distractions, never-ending demands, and over-stimulation. Lord Jesus, help us—help me cultivate a Mary heart in a Martha world. My problem isn’t the world I inhabit, but the heart that inhabits me. So we make King David’s prayer ours, “Give us an undivided heart that I we live in awe of your name,” Jesus ([Ps. 86:11](#)). You are the “one thing worth being concerned about”; you are the “one thing” that will never be taken from us, Jesus.

My “must get done list” isn’t going to change; but as you refresh and deepen my communion with you, I’m certain I can live with a quieter, gentler, kinder heart. By the compelling wonder of your beauty and the relentless power of grace, I trust you for that work in my heart. In the gospel, I hear you say, “Come away, my beloved, my desire is for you.” To which I respond gladly, Lord Jesus. So very Amen I pray, in your compassionate and welcoming name.

Luke 11: 1-4 The Message

Ask for What You Need

1 One day he was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said, “Master, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.”

2-4 So he said, “When you pray, say,

Father,

Reveal who you are.

Set the world right.

Keep us alive with three square meals.

Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.

Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.”