

## **Notes for Small Groups WB.25<sup>th</sup> May '25**

### **Trouble in the Kitchen**

We have been on a journey through Easter Sunday, the Ladies' Day and the mountain experience as we now come down the mountain where there is fruit in the valley. This week we are looking at an incident in the life of Jesus that is very like things that can happen with us today. Our reading focusses on how we are as people.

- When you know someone is coming for a meal what is your signature dish?

**Luke 10. 38-42**

Jesus and His disciples have been going from place to place spreading the good news about God when they come near the village where Jesus' friends live. Martha's house is always welcoming. She has a ministry of hospitality and her sister Mary is with her there. When she sees them, Martha invites them in and begins to prepare a meal for everyone.

- Are you happy for people to just drop in or do you prefer to know they are coming so you can make sure you have food in for a meal?

It is likely that Martha was not expecting them so she would have had to start from scratch and her focus was on making the meal for these very important guests.

While Martha was doing that, Jesus sat down and began to teach and Mary, excited to be with Jesus, sat down at His feet to listen. It is interesting to read that three times in the Gospels we read about Mary being at the feet of Jesus. In John 11, when Lazarus dies, Mary falls at the feet of Jesus. Another time she anoints Jesus' feet with perfume. She is always at His feet.

- It was a physical act for Mary but how can we be always at Jesus' feet?

We see Martha serving people. In this story and in John 12 she is serving. It is her gifting and she does it well. Cooking is her forte... perhaps Jesus knew this so he tipped up at her house in time for supper.

Mary seems in awe of Jesus. Was she happy for Martha to serve while she listened to His teaching? After all it was Martha's house and she who invited them in.

When the trouble starts Jesus says there is really only one option and Mary has chosen it. There would be time for Martha's lovely meal later on. The practice of hospitality not only includes welcoming people in, feeding them and providing shelter it also means giving of ourselves, our time, our attention, our presence.

- Can you think of the times when we have the opportunity to show hospitality? When could you be involved in that if not already?

**Martha's behaviour teaches us about losing focus...**

1] **Loss of focus can mean that we become distracted.** We can be more worried about what others are not doing rather than concentrating on what we should be doing. Martha was distracted. Although she has the gifting of providing good food, instead of concentrating on the cooking she criticises Mary for not joining her in the kitchen. Martha gets angry. Something is not right with her. This can happen to us and our reaction to what we think

should be happening becomes the problem rather than the behaviour of the one we are complaining about.

- Does anything particularly irritate you regarding attitudes of other people when there is something to be done? How can you stop yourself being irritated by that?

Our ministries and giftings are not our own, they are given us to use in order to serve others and God.

### **Peter 4:10-11**

Martha should be serving with a grateful heart not a critical one. We don't do things to get glory and attention but to serve God. When you come to church are you bringing a heart full of praise or complaint and criticism? Jesus tells Martha that she has made herself the centre of attention. He does it lovingly but he is plain and clear.

2] **Loss of focus can cause us to question God's care for us.** Martha challenges Jesus to do something to help her to show that he cares about her and release the stress on her. Sometimes we can cry out 'God don't you care about me?' God always answers but with one of three responses. Yes. No. Or wait. When we take our eyes off God we begin to question His care for us.

### **Luke 12:6-7**

God cares more for us than we care for each other.

- Does anything cause you to doubt God's love for you? How can you remind yourself of His love?

3] **When we lose focus, we find fault with each other.** Martha is very grumpy as she works on the meal. She is angry. When we do this, we are forgetting the other person is made in the image of God like ourselves. If our focus is on the person, the situation or the event we need to re-focus and put it back onto The Lord. Jesus affectionately calls to Martha. He uses her name twice and gently explains that she needs to re-focus.

When our worship is only 1 ½ hours once a week we have lost our focus. We should be worshipping God all the other days of the week in everything we do and bring that worship into church with us. Perhaps Jesus needs to take us aside and remind us that we are here to glorify God even as we are loved by and worth so much to Him.

### **Are we Mary or Martha? Or can we be a mixture of the two?**

- How can we help each other to be that mixture? What would that mixture look like?