

**No 3 Domestic Distractions Luke 10 v 38 to 42**

This narrative, unique to Luke’s gospel, contains a real tension that could be similar to one we may have experienced. Martha is clearly wanting to get some work done, Mary is not helping because she is sat down listening to Jesus. Our reaction to this incident may have everything to do with the kind of people we are. Some of us are very task orientated and want to be tidy.

What both women are doing is commendable. Work is an honourable thing and encouraged many times in the scriptures. Sitting at the feet of Jesus and soaking up his teaching is certainly to be encouraged.

1. Where do your sympathies lie?

Should Mary have helped out so both the sisters could listen to Jesus?

Should Martha have abandoned her work and taken the opportunity to listen to Jesus?

Martha’s perspective is that she has been lumbered with a lot of work and her sister is idle. Her question to Jesus expects a positive answer. She expects Jesus to come to her aid. Martha is doing an honourable thing but she is consumed with what others are doing. Jesus doesn’t criticise her for what she is doing but for being concerned about others activities.

1. When we are involved with a task that is a real burden, are we likely to criticise people who fail to help us?

Should we just get on and finish the task ourselves even if we get little or no help?

In a family context should we expect people to pull their weight?

Mary’s perspective is that she is willing to sit at Jesus’ feet and fellowship with him as a disciple. The very fact that the picture painted of these two women is that they are true disciples. This illustrates Jesus’ attitude to the women who followed him. There is something very calm in Mary’s behaviour.

1. Are we likely to be people who are so busy that we give ourselves very little time to absorb Jesus’ teaching?

Jesus makes it very clear that Mary has chosen a good thing which will bring her great reward.

How can we find time to read and absorb Jesus’ teaching?

Do we give it a high enough priority?

In asking Jesus to deal with her complaint, Martha assumed that her evaluation of Mary’s priorities was right. Jesus’ refusal to endorse Martha’s view shows that, although she was doing good work, she should worry less about Mary’s choices.

1. Are there dangers in a church community that we will express opinions about what others are engaged in?

Are we sometimes critical of people who are very different to us?

Do we value people who have very different gifts to our own?

Should we be more self-critical before we have a go at other people?

One commentator said - ‘Think of how much more effective the church would be if we gave half the energy to assessing our own walk than we do is assessing the walk of others. What is really crucial for an effective community is for each member to take individual responsibility for his or her own walk and to allow the community to minister in a positive and encouraging way to each other’

(Darrell Bock – NIV Application Commentary).

1. Discuss the quote.

Does criticism come more easily than encouragement?

WHY?

The home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus in Bethany was a place of refuge for Jesus. He often escaped there from the cauldron of Jerusalem. Every home needs to be managed and Martha was doing just that and needed the support of her sister. But Mary was listening to the teachings of her master and Lord.

1. Was Jesus too hard on Martha? If listening to Jesus is so important what are our plans for the future so we can hear more of what he has said?

How might listening to Jesus’ teaching make us better at managing our homes?

**If you’re a MARY ask God to help you support a MARTHA**

**If you’re a MARTHA make time to be a MARY**