



Luke 10:38–42

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. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.'

Reflection

I read an article recently that began with words I think we can all relate to. Here's an excerpt:

This is the story of my day, yesterday, a typical weekday: two loads of laundry done pre-8am. Thirteen hours of work at my computer. Toast at my desk for lunch (too busy to assemble the planned salad), 244 emails received and 53 sent. A dash to the post office

to dispatch my brother's embarrassingly late birthday present. A jog to pick up my two small children from different ends of town, before feeding them, bathing them, wrestling them into bed and shamefully praying they'll choose short bedtime stories rather than long ones. A meeting with the carpenter who is currently remodelling my kitchen (the spiralling cost of which means I now need to take on more work to pay for it). A romantic late night chat with my husband about whether he'd renewed the car insurance (he hadn't. I'll un-delegate that one, then). At midnight, I'm painting my nails in bed, ahead of tomorrow's work event, hoping I won't smudge them in my sleep.

And just before I finally pass out: the thought that I still haven't organised my birthday party. Or replied to that text from my oldest friend. Or opened the Kindle that my dad gave me for Christmas five months ago and asks me about every week. Or ... Zzzzz.

Ask anyone how they are doing, and the answer is always the same: busy, busy, busy (that is, of course, if they've got time to answer their phone).

Author Brigid Schulte,

'Somewhere around the end of the 20th century, busyness became a way of life, an exhausting everyday-athon.'

Perhaps Jesus has something to teach us about the modern epidemic of busyness in today's passage from Luke 10. Let's look at it together now, beginning at verse 38.

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needed – or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.’

The story of Mary and Martha is a story of contrasts. One sits at Jesus’ feet. The other is busy serving him. One listens to Jesus’ words. The other is distracted by all the preparations that have to be made. One is at peace, concentrating on what is most important. The other is worried and upset about a great many things. Both offer us competing pictures of discipleship and not only do they remind me of my life, but they also remind me of the title of a book I once read, called, ‘Too busy not to pray’.

This little episode in the life of Jesus almost takes on the form of a parable, something

we can all relate to. You know the feeling, you're having guests over and so you throw yourself into the preparations. Perhaps cooking is not your thing so there's the added pressure of the timing and quality of the meal. The whole point of having people over is to enjoy their company but you find yourself so caught up in getting the food right that you can't seem to relax enough to enter into a sustained conversation. But the point of the evening isn't the food; it's the people you've invited into your home – even if all your hard work is geared towards them and their enjoyment.

And it is the same for the Christian life. It's easy to get so caught up in serving Jesus in our ministry that we forget the most important part which is to regularly sit at

his feet and enjoy his company. We forget that the Christian life is first and foremost about our personal relationship with Jesus which is so easy to crowd out with activity. We become too busy to pray. Too busy, and often with Christian things, to spend regular time at Jesus' feet reading our Bibles, and walking with him through the day in prayer.

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Your personal relationship with me.

Think & Pray

How is your personal relationship with Jesus going? Do you feel at the moment in your 'everydayathon' worried and upset about many things, distracted by all the preparations that you are making? No doubt you are doing many very good things. Raising your children, serving your church, helping your friends. All good things. But few things are *needed* – or indeed only one. And that is sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening to him. Being refreshed in him. Finding peace in him. And then going out, re-energised, replenished, revitalised so that you can love and serve people not out of an empty tank, not running on empty, but loving and serving people out of the overflow of a heart filled with his joy, peace and presence.

Are you more of a Mary or more of a Mar-

tha? I think ideally, the Christian is a little of both these personality types. Mary leads to a sustainable Martha. Martha leads to a missional Mary. We see both in Jesus, withdrawing to spend regular time with his Father in prayer, time which seems to have sustained and empowered his ministry. How can you work a little more Mary into your daily routines? Is there a moment you can take today? A timeout you can spend with our Lord perhaps just walking down the street enjoying the sun on your face and spending a few moments in conversation with him?

You could start right now by taking a little more time than usual at the end of this devotion to pray to him. Ask him for wisdom in the way you use your time. Ask him for grace in the demands that others put on

your schedule. I've kept today's talk a little shorter. Why not use this extra time to rest in Jesus' presence? Listen to his words to you today from Luke 10. Talk them over with him in prayer. And see if they don't change your day ahead for the better.