

HELP FOR THE WORRIED AND BOTHERED

LUKE 10:38-42

The following are resource questions that you can use with your Care Group for discussion. They are based on the sermon preached on Sunday, May 9 2010, by Dr Arnold Wong at the Grace Baptist Church, Singapore. The sermon is available online at <http://www.gracebap.org.sg/worship/series.html>.

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The two sisters, Martha and Mary, are seen as contrasting two ways of attentiveness. Luke does not suggest that Martha's service is wrong. To begin with, he uses the same word for her service as that used for the service of the Seven Deacons who are appointed to serve the poor in the early church. Furthermore, when the Greek literally says '*Mary has chosen the good part*,' this does not imply that Martha's part is bad. It is simply that comparatives ('better,' 'worse,' etc) are rare in Gospel Greek. Jesus' language was stark and uncompromising.

The command to love one's neighbour as oneself was illustrated by the story of the Good Samaritan. Now the command to love God above all things is illustrated by the story of Martha and Mary.

Jesus is not only addressed as 'Lord!' which happens in Mark, and may mean no more than 'Sir!'. Here, Jesus is also described as 'the Lord' (v.41), which strongly suggests 'the Lord God'. So, Mary's love for Jesus is an illustration of the love of God with the whole heart.

Principle:

Love for God is shown by devotion to his Word in the midst of life's demands. Dedication to Jesus takes precedence over all other responsibilities and obligations.

Martha: For once, a person in need did not receive Jesus' blessing. Why?

The need was out of focus and misplaced. Martha was too stressed out about earthly things. Her life was out of focus, dedicated to fulfilling the world's expectations rather than Jesus' Life was one essential need: to hear and obey the Word of God (Luke 8:18-20).

Mary: She made the right choice – to hear Jesus' teaching. Jesus would not take away from her the blessing and opportunity.

At the crossroads of decision-making, Martha had opted for worldly expectation and social obligation while Mary had opted to hear Jesus' teaching. Martha needed to change her priorities. When the Word is taught, listen – all else is secondary.

Question: **How do you balance between 'worship' and 'work' of the Lord?**

Abide in Christ...

- ▶ **How does one do this?**

- ▶ **Is this applicable in today's environment?**

- ▶ **Guard your time with the Lord...Have we been intentional in doing that?**

- ▶ **How can we improve on it? Take time to listen to God...**

- ▶ **Where and How can we "squeeze" the time?**

Application: Focus your life on God's Word, not on social obligations and duties.

Prayer: Lord, let me listen to your word. Do not let your message be clouded over or crowded out by my pre-occupations and busyness. Give me the tranquility and openness to hear your message in my head and in my heart.