

## Home Group Leaders Discussion Guide

### Luke 10:38-42

This brief incident in the life of Jesus is only recorded in Luke. So a question we might want to ask ourselves is, “Why is this included?” As Luke was putting together his account of Jesus’ life, considering all the material, what he would include and what he would not include, why did he decide to include this?

It is actually very consistent with one of Luke’s primary angles. Luke, more than the other Gospel writers, emphasizes how the good news of Jesus and His kingdom breakdown social and cultural barriers, and establishes new/better social and cultural norms, that His people are to embody.

In this particular passage we see the role and status of women being confronted/challenged. In the home of Mary and Martha (and Lazarus, as we find out from John’s gospel) we find Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to what He said. This is the traditional posture of a disciple, someone preparing to become like their rabbi. More importantly, this was NOT the place for women. It’s interesting that in the passage ONLY Martha pipes up about it. It’s probably a safe assumption that the other disciples were also wondering why Mary was hanging out with them.

We’re told that Martha was “distracted”, literally “drawn away”, by all the preparations. Let’s not be too hard on Martha. Hosting Jesus and the 12 was no easy task, and it was certainly her devotion to Jesus that was motivating her to open her home and serve them as she was.

In frustration she came to Jesus and asked, “*Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself?*” (10:40). I wonder if any of the families of the other disciples asked, or at least thought, similar sentiments? The disciples had left families, and family businesses, and left those who stayed back to do all the work, while they traipsed around with Jesus.

There was likely something worrying and upsetting Martha beyond having to do all the work herself. Beyond not being diligent in the culturally accepted womanly role of hosting, Mary was (quietly) embracing the role of disciple. It is hard for us to fully feel the impact of all that was going on in this situation. Mary was intermingling “with the boys” in a way that broke from social/cultural norms. And most surprising, Jesus did not have a problem with it, and in fact encouraged it!

We could even wonder if what was troubling Martha was not so much having to carry the work load by herself, but perhaps some envy/jealousy of her sister, or maybe even some frustration in herself for not having the courage to drop everything and sit and listen at Jesus’ feet. The gospel naturally reprioritizes things, but it’s up to us if we’re going to embrace that reprioritization or continue with the previously learned priorities. This was likely part of the tension Martha was experiencing. To fully embrace the life Jesus wants for us we need to analyze and discern if the values, priorities, norms, and standards that we allow to guide our lives are truly the ones He wants for us, or if we’ve simply accepted what’s been handed to us

by the world we live in. The gospel, the present reality of God's kingdom, frees us—if we let it—from the trappings of the world around us. Now not everything that has been handed to us is “bad”, but it may not be “best”. Notice Jesus' response to Martha, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken from her.” (10:42). Jesus' response was so gentle and loving to both sisters. To repeat someone's name (Martha, Martha) is a Hebrew expression of intimacy. Jesus cared deeply for these sisters (we learn in John 11-12 how close this particular family was to Jesus). He understood and appreciated Martha and the pressure it must be to host a large number of people. At the same time, He was not going to deny someone the opportunity to sit at his feet and learn from His teaching (again, from the posture of learning so as to imitate).

- Q. (possible icebreaker) Describe your relationship with your siblings. What do you appreciate about them? What frustrates you about them? (How might they respond about you?)**
- Q. When do you feel “pressure”, “stress”, “worry”, and “frustration”? At such times, what would you identify the true cause?**
- Q. In this particular passage we see “the place of women” challenged by the gospel. What other cultural/social norms can you identify that the gospel challenges?**
- Q. What tension do you experience between kingdom values vs worldly values? Or, in what ways do you wrestle with “good” vs “best”?**
- Q. If you were one of the 12 disciples, how do you think you would have felt having Mary next to you at Jesus' feet? Is there anyone (or any type of person) that you might struggle with sitting next to you at church?**
- Q. What distracts you from spending time with Jesus?**
- Q. Is there anyone who's relationship with Jesus you are jealous/envious of?**
- Q. What cultural norms do you feel bound by? How might Jesus want to free you from those?**

*For those that were fortunate to hear the sermon on this passage (Awesome job Ila!) here are some questions specifically from the message.*

**Ice breaker: Describe a personality trait you have that may be frustrating to a family member or friend?**

**What types of things make you worried or anxious?**

**If you were in Martha's shoes, how would you handle the stress?**

**What do you think about the way Jesus reprimands Martha?**

**How do you handle it when someone corrects your attitude or when you correct another?**

**Which family attack is hardest for you? Anxiety? Illness/death? Criticism?**

**Both Martha and Judas were critical of Mary. What is the different about them?**

**This family's pain caused the one time in scripture where it says, "Jesus Wept." What do you think that means for us?**

**This family served Jesus in different ways. In what ways do you serve God now? In what ways can you to be a better servant with the gifts God has already given you?**