



Discussion Guide

Date: 11/16/2025

Sermon Title: How do I choose what's better?

Scripture: Luke 10:38-42

This discussion guide is a layout to be used with a group or class. We have included opening and closing prayers to start and end your group. The guide may be used for personal or family reflection as well.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and Loving God, we come before You with full hands and full hearts. So often, we rush to serve, to fix, to do. Yet today, we pause, to listen, to sit at Your feet. Help us discern what is truly needed in our lives. Quiet our minds so that we might hear Your voice above the noise. Teach us the way of love that chooses Your presence over performance. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Opening Question:

1. Share a time when you worked really hard to help someone, but later realized you were doing something they didn't actually need or want. How did that feel?

Digging into the Word:

In our busy, service-oriented world; even in ministry; we often find ourselves caught between doing for Jesus and being with Jesus. Martha's hospitality was good and faithful, yet Jesus gently redirected her toward what was better: presence over pressure, devotion over distraction, relationship over responsibility. Choosing "what's better" does not mean abandoning service; but rather grounding all our doing in being and resting first in Christ's love before acting in Christ's name. In the spirit of Small Things. Great Love, we learn that sometimes the most significant act is not what we do, but how we are present.

Read aloud: Luke 10:38-42 (NRSV) and a few different versions prior to digging into these questions.

1. What stands out to you most about Mary and Martha in this passage? What do you think Martha was feeling at that moment? Have you ever felt similarly anxious about serving or doing ministry work?
2. Jesus calls Martha's name twice: "Martha, Martha." What tone do you imagine in his voice? What do you think he's communicating beyond just words? When have you found yourself, like Martha, so focused on doing what you thought was right that you forgot to ask God what God wanted from you?
3. Why do you think Jesus described Mary's choice as "the better part"? What does it mean to you personally to 'sit at the feet of Jesus,' and when was the last time you intentionally did this?
4. How do you see yourself in Martha's story? How about Mary's?
5. When have you felt that tension between doing something for Jesus and simply being with Jesus?

Other scriptures to consider:

Psalm 46:10; Matthew 6:33; John 15:4-5; James 2:17

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Sermon Questions:

1. Pastor Allison in the sermon talks about prioritizing what is important. We often prioritize incorrectly while trying to do the right thing. Like Martha, we can be busy doing what we think God wants without asking God what we should do.
2. When do we think we are doing the right thing, but later find out they are not?
3. Pastor Allison quotes R. Alan Culpepper, "Martha presumes to tell Jesus what he should do. Mary lets Jesus tell her what she should do." Martha recognizes Jesus Lordship, then goes on to tell Jesus what to do. How do we tell God what to do in our own lives? When have you been like Martha?
4. The sermon says, "We all get to the point where we're not loving, we're just doing." What are the signs in your life that you've reached this point? How can you recognize it earlier?
5. The sermon mentions that Martha had probably heard Jesus teach about loving neighbors and serving others. How can we avoid the trap of following Jesus' teachings without really following Jesus?

Applying it:

1. Are you more naturally a "Martha" or a "Mary"? How has that shaped your faith journey? What are the strengths and weaknesses of your natural tendency?
2. The sermon asks: "When was the last time you tapped out?" Share your answer with the group. What does "tapping out" look like for you practically? How does the concept of 'tapping out' challenge or resonate with your understanding of rest, self-care, and spiritual renewal?
3. What makes it difficult for you to sit at Jesus' feet? Is it guilt? Busyness? Not knowing how? Fear of what you might hear? What one small step could you take this week to slow down and spend intentional time with God?
4. How might you reframe your service, not as a burden, but as an overflow of your time with Jesus? How can you tell when your ministry, service, or daily responsibilities have become sources of anxiety rather than expressions of love?
5. How can small acts of love flow from time spent in the presence of Christ? What one small step could you take this week to slow down and spend intentional time with God?
6. What specific practices or disciplines help you ensure that your service flows from God's love rather than from your own striving?
7. What might it mean for our church community to "choose what's better" together?

Wesleyan-Theological Reflection:

John Wesley taught that holy living integrates both personal piety (our relationship with God) and social holiness (our service and love for neighbor). Mary and Martha represent these two movements of grace; devotion and action; and both are vital. Yet, as Wesley noted, "All outward works are but means of grace; they are never the end themselves." Wesley emphasized that we are called to "attend upon all the ordinances of God" which are prayer, scripture, worship, the Lord's Supper. Not out of duty, but as a means of grace through which our hearts are formed for service. When we sit at Jesus' feet, we are renewed to serve with humility and love.



“The best means of all is to sit as a little child at the feet of Jesus and there learn the true nature of religion.”
— John Wesley, Sermon 16: The Means of Grace

1. What do you find harder sitting or doing?
2. What is this discussion that challenges you?
3. What are you maybe being called to do differently? Or not do?

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, You invite us to sit at Your feet, to rest in Your presence, and to listen to Your voice. Forgive us when we are distracted by many things, when our busyness keeps us from You. Teach us to choose what is better and to seek You first, to find our peace in You, and to let our service flow from the love we receive. May our small acts, offered in Your great love, bring life to others and joy to Your heart. In Your holy name we pray, Amen.

WAYS TO RESPOND (or challenges for you this week)

1. Identify one area where you're serving but feeling exhausted or frustrated and find someone to "tap in" for you (even temporarily). Use that time to rest and be filled by God's love and notice how it affects your service when you return.
2. Before taking on a new commitment or project this week. Spend some time asking God: "Is this what you want me to do?" Wait and listen before saying yes and practice the difference between presuming and asking.
3. Make a list of all the ways you're currently serving (church, work, family, community). Next to each, honestly assess: Am I doing this with great love, or just doing it? Pray over the list and ask God what needs to change.