

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

### *Serving with Generosity*

Jesus entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Luke 10:38–39

It's interesting that it was Martha who welcomed Jesus, but it was Mary who sat at His feet listening to Him. As the story goes on, we discover that Martha took her responsibility of hospitality seriously; she was very busy preparing a meal. But it appears that Mary needed a different form of hospitality from our Lord Himself. As Martha prepared to feed Jesus so as to care for His physical hunger, Mary sought to be fed by our Lord so as to feed her spiritual hunger. And interestingly, it was the generosity of Martha who was diligent in preparing the meal that made it possible for her sister to receive the spiritual food she longed for.

When we read this story, we can easily become critical of Martha because she complained to Jesus about her sister. It is easy to see Martha's frustration in her words, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me." And though Martha may have been a little impatient, Jesus' response to her was gentle and corrective. "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her." What was that "better part?" It was Mary's prayerful attentiveness to Jesus. She was hungry for His teaching, and Jesus offered it to her in a very personal and loving way. And though this image of Mary before Jesus is a beautiful image to ponder and to use as a model of our own prayer, there is also something important to be said about Martha's role in making Mary's prayer possible.

Because Martha was diligent in taking care of the duties of hospitality, Mary felt the freedom to sit at Jesus' feet. Perhaps the ideal response from Martha would have been to notice that Mary was being spiritually fed by our Lord and to rejoice in that fact, giving her the continued freedom to sit at Jesus' feet. If Martha would have realized this, then she would have continued working in the background so that her sister could continue listening to Jesus. But even though Martha did interrupt this sacred moment for her sister, the fact remains that her initial diligence in taking care of preparing the meal did give Mary some time alone with Jesus.

Reflect, today, upon these two women and the unique calling they each were given at the time of Jesus' visit to their house. One was called to be fed by our Lord as she sat at His feet. The other was called to work hard so as to make it easier for her sister to receive that spiritual nourishment. Know that both of these callings are important. For that reason, if God calls you to be more like Martha at times, rejoice in that fact and work hard at serving in many ways. If God calls you to be more like Mary at times, then rejoice in those moments and sit prayerfully at the feet of our Lord, being fed by His holy Words.