

Balancing Acts of Piety and Acts of Mercy

Luke 10:38-42 (NRSV)

³⁸Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." ⁴¹But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; ⁴²there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

Discuss the following questions. If you are in a larger group, you may want to divide into groups of three for this discussion. You may then decide to report back to the larger group or to move directly to prayer time.

1. Was Martha's act of mercy (hospitality) important? Why?
2. Was Mary's act of piety (learning) important? Why?
3. Do you feel that you are more of a Martha or a Mary?
4. In living as a disciple, is piety or mercy more important?
5. What was the message about balance in this passage?
6. In the gospels, how do you see Jesus practicing/balancing both piety and mercy?
7. How might we become better at balancing piety and mercy?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, each of us is probably more aligned to practice either piety or mercy, but it is your desire that we find balance in the two. Teach us to find new ways of balancing them in our lives. May we be faithful in deepening ourselves in love as your devoted disciples. Amen.