

I don't know if it has affected you this way, but the heat has slowed me down this last week and I have taken more time between meetings and encounters to be silent with Jesus and to rest properly. The net effect is noticeable, I can't remember taking so much joy in each meeting that I have had, finding so much inspiration and feeling so grateful to each individual.

Rest and reflection are deeply important. **We are going to do something a little different for two minutes. We are going to talk to each other in twos and threes. Please make sure that everyone around you is in a small group. Here is the question. What is the best way for you to rest on a daily basis and on a yearly basis? You have two minutes, begin now! Get examples**

Notice we are all different, one person's rest is another person's nightmare.

There are two things happening in this story and one of them is not what we are often presented with: it's better to sit at Jesus's feet than it is to actively serve him, it's not that.

If you were listening to Luke's gospel around the time it was written your first gasp of disbelief would be when you heard that Mary sat at the feet of Jesus. Sat at the feet of Jesus? Tim Wright explains That's what a disciple does. Mary was preparing to be a Rabbi like her Lord, a woman. Of course earlier in Luke's story you probably would have been equally astounded to hear that Simon, Andrew, James and John were also sitting at the feet of Jesus or were called to be disciples; uneducated fishermen? Unheard of.

The second gasp would come when Martha challenges Jesus about the behaviour of her sister. I think this would have been the bigger gasp. Kenneth Baker in his Book.....writes that this breach of hospitality on Martha's part, confronting a guest, drawing him into a dispute with your own household, making him uncomfortable was beyond rude, breaking the deeply held tradition of Middle Eastern hospitality. For those of you who have ever visited the Ahmadiyya, or better yet the Middle East in person, you have an idea of what is involved in hospitality. It takes precedence over everything when there is a guest in the home. I wonder what was happening here.

Martha has invited the Lord into her home. Can you imagine having Jesus in your home? Wouldn't you want to serve him in any way that gave him rest, that could show your appreciation? But she is resentful, everything is distracting her, annoying her. I think Martha may have been unprepared, taken on a bit too much. I don't think Martha had been getting enough rest. The joy of actually, physically serving the Lord could have been enough for her, could have energised her with joy and could have given her the grace to appreciate Mary's journey too. Jesus is not criticising her for making dinner, I believe Martha could have also chosen the better part if she were serving with all her heart.

Last week Clive told us that we must love our neighbours just like we love ourselves and that we are not good at this. I agree. We are primarily not good at loving ourselves well much of the time which makes it almost impossible to love our neighbours well, we may be good at indulging ourselves, or defending ourselves from offense, but neither of these are love. When we love our lord with all that we have open in vulnerability, sitting at his feet like Mary, serving out of the abundance of gratitude like Martha could have or doing or being

anything that abides in him, we can love ourselves and our neighbours, we can choose the better part.

Sometimes the most difficult thing to do is to say no, to let someone else do the thing so we can have time, but it's important that we do just that. How and when will you rest this week?