

Today, a few thoughts about Martha and Mary. You can read their stories in Luke 10:38-42 and John 11:17-40.

Here is Luke's story, John tells us more.

Luke 10:38-42

At the Home of Martha and Mary

³⁸As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

⁴¹"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things,⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Martha is shown as the busy one, Mary the tranquil and thoughtful one. Many today lead Martha-like lives - so busy running around. We have often been brought up to assume that busying ourselves incessantly in fulfilling people's wants and needs will guarantee their approval. Perhaps some like helping others because it makes them feel needed or helps them escape from their own lives.

Martha is scurrying around cooking and moans to Jesus: "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself. Tell her to help me" (mind you, some people like being one-man bands).

Jesus doesn't judge though, does he? And Mary was content to sit at the Lord's feet, listening to His words. Did Martha sit as well do you think?

The trouble is, if we were all Marys nothing would get done. Would Martha have left the soup to boil dry and burn? If we were all Marthas, we'd be exhausted.

Sadly, at this very stressful time, we need Marthas to help their neighbours with food, medicine etc. But we also need to take time to be quiet and spend time reading the Scriptures, praying and meditating.

We need to be a Martha and a Mary at the same time! - a tall order!

"God give me Martha's diligence and Mary's love for truth" (Elwood McQuaid)

Jeff Burditt

PS My wife, Ruth, is a Martha and self-isolation is driving her mad!

Klara Munkre wrote this prayer which shows how she combined being a Martha and a Mary.

Lord of all pots and pans and things
Since I've not time to be
A saint by doing lovely things or
Watching late with Thee
Or dreaming in the dawn light or
Storming Heaven's gates
Make me a saint by getting meals and
Washing up the plates.

Although I must have Martha's hands,
I have a Mary mind
And when I black the boots and shoes,
Thy sandals Lord I find.
I think of how they trod the earth,
What time I scrub the floor
Accept this meditation Lord,
I haven't time for more.

Warm all the kitchen with Thy love,
And light it with Thy peace
Forgive me all my worrying and make
My grumbling cease.
Thou who didst love to give men food,
In room or by the sea
Accept this service that I do,
I do it unto Thee.