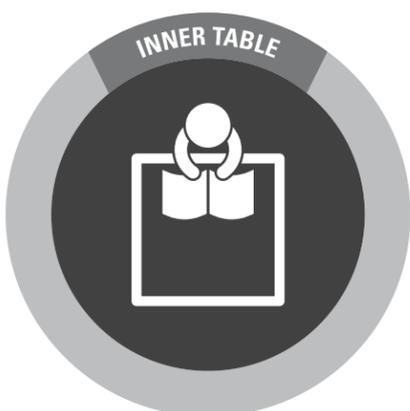


# Sermon Notes

“Belonging”  
June 2nd, 2019



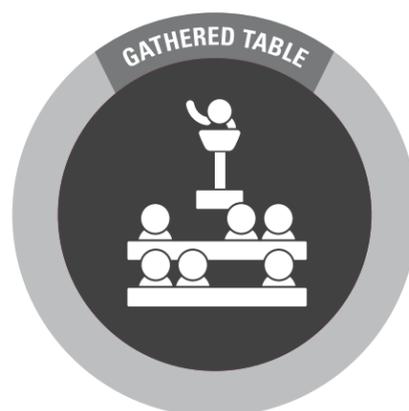
**First  
Friends**  
Church



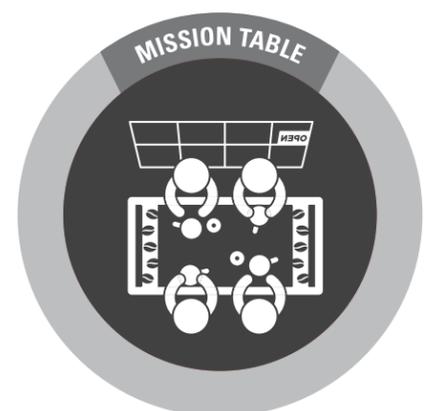
*Seeking God*  
in Solitude



*Finding God*  
in Friendship



*Celebrating God*  
in Community



*Reflecting God*  
in Relationships

## Reflection Questions *(please use these individually or in groups)*

### Sermon Questions:

1. What do your current connections look like? To what do you belong? How much do you value each of them? Where does your connection to your worshiping community fit in?
2. Pray for those within the Church who may feel alone and disconnected. Ask God to reveal ways you might reach out to someone who may be in that situation.
3. Thank God for the lavish love showered on us through Christ! Then, consider what kinds of "concerns" have been weighing on you lately and how they might be manifested into "care."
4. Is there someone with whom you're experiencing division or hostility? Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in an attempt to bring down those walls.

### Additional Questions:

5. Why do you think humans are so wired for connection? How can you be a help to those who are struggling to find connection or have lost it?
6. Are you creating spaces of hospitality for others, especially those who are different from you? Think about all the ways the world encourages us to draw boundaries.

## Devotional Reading & Inward Reflection

- **Genesis 2:18-23** | How can the church honor women better with a fuller understanding of the word "helper" found in the Hebrew language? In the original translation, it means vitally important and powerful rather than "assistant."
- **1 John 3:1-18** | What does it look like for you to lay down your life for someone else? This isn't about just dying for someone, but sacrificing your time and resources for others.
- **Ephesians 2:11-18** | Do we as the church do a good job of offering the peace we have received from God to others? Where can we improve?
- **James 2:14-19** | We often offer our "thoughts and prayers" for others in situations of distress. Is that enough? What else can we do?

## Self-Care Disciplines *(Excerpts from Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster)*

June Discipline: Steps into Worship | "Presence & Practice" (p.158,170)

To worship is to experience Reality, to touch Life. It is to know, to feel, to experience the resurrected Christ in the midst of the gathered community. It is a breaking into the glory of God, or better yet, being invaded by the glory of God.

First, learn to practice the presence of God daily. Really try to follow Paul's words, "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). Punctuate every moment with inward whisperings of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. Have personal times of inner worship and confession and bible study and attentiveness to Christ, your present Teacher. All this will heighten your expectancy in public worship because the gathered experience of worship just becomes a continuation and an intensification of what you have been trying to do all week long.

Second, have many different experiences of worship. Worship God when you are alone. Have home groups not just for bible study, but for the very experience of worship itself. Gather little groups of two and three and learn to offer up a sacrifice of praise. Many things can happen in smaller groups that will empower and impact the larger gatherings.

**Note: Don't let these burden you each week. Please engage only if you feel it would be beneficial in caring for yourself. Sometimes self-care involves giving yourself a break, even from self care disciplines.**