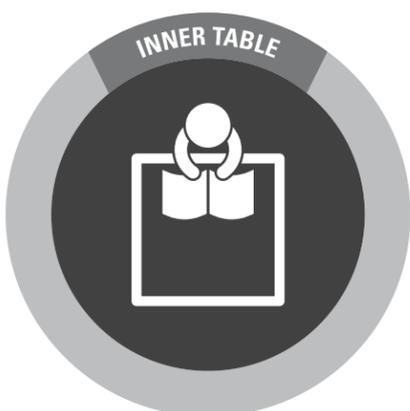


Sermon Notes

“Stronger Together”
September 22nd, 2019



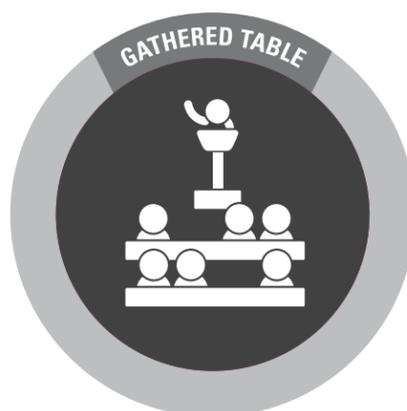
**First
Friends**
Church



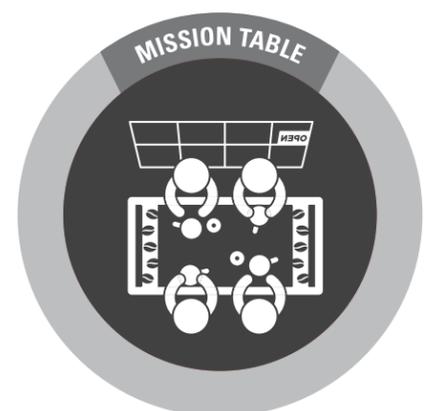
Seeking God
in Solitude



Finding God
in Friendship



Celebrating God
in Community



Reflecting God
in Relationships

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

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you believe that, when you are “built up” by God and others, you have the kind of value in God’s eyes that the Israelites saw in the temple? Why or why not?
2. Ask God to lead you to someone to encourage today or this week, spurring him/her on to good works.
3. Ask God to lead you to someone to comfort today or this week, helping to soothe a wound he/she has recently suffered.
4. What are your gifts? What are your talents? What are you passionate about? How can those things be used to make us stronger together?

Additional Questions:

5. Do you know, truly know, some of the people you worship with? If so, thank God for those relationships! If not, how might you begin to know some of the folks around you in a more intimate way?
6. Do you offer your times and talents to edify the body of believers? How might you plug in, if you haven’t already, to serving others with the resources you have?

Devotional Reading & Inward Reflection

- **1 Corinthians 14:1-33** | Are you allowing space for prophetic voices to speak truth in your life? A good test for a prophetic voice is if it challenges you? Are you allowing these voices to grow and shape you?
- **1 Corinthians 12:4-7** | Why do we tend to elevate some gifts over others in the church today? Is it more about the gift or the willingness to serve?
- **2 Chronicles 5:11-14** | What does it look like today to be moved by the presence of God? Do we sometimes overlook the idea of “waiting on the Lord?”
- **Hebrews 10:19-25** | How do you situate your life so that you are in a position to spur other people on and to be spurred on by other people? Why is this so important for the development of our faith?

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

September Discipline: Meditation | Social Meditation (p. 32)

This week’s form of meditation is focused on our social surroundings. It is to meditate upon the events of our time and to seek to perceive their significance. We have a spiritual obligation to penetrate the inner meaning of events, not to gain power, control, or things not yet known to us, but to gain prophetic perspective. Thomas Merton writes that the person “...who has meditated on the Passion of the Christ but has not meditated on the extermination camps of Dachau and Auschwitz has not yet fully entered into the experience of Christianity in our time.” This form of meditation is best accomplished with the “bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other.” You must not, however, be controlled by the absurd political clichés and propaganda fed us today. Actually, news outlets and cable news are generally far too shallow and slanted to be of much help. We would do well to hold the events of our time before God and ask for prophetic insight to discern where these things lead. Further, we should ask for guidance for anything we personally should be doing to be salt and light in our decaying and dark world.

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.