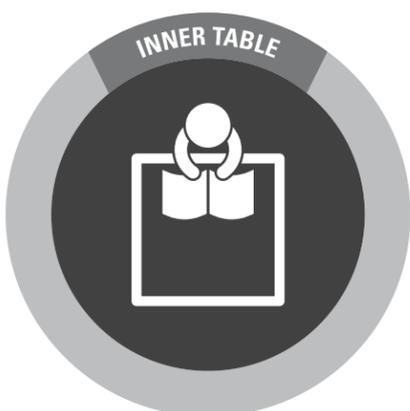


Sermon Notes

“It Has to Be the Hedge”
October 27th, 2019



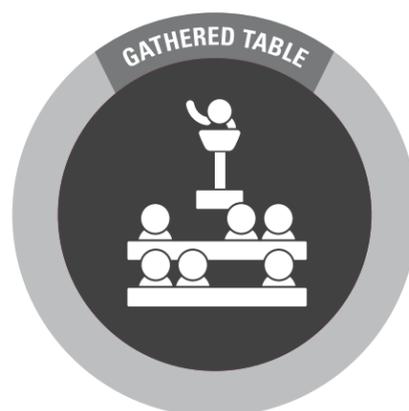
**First
Friends**
Church



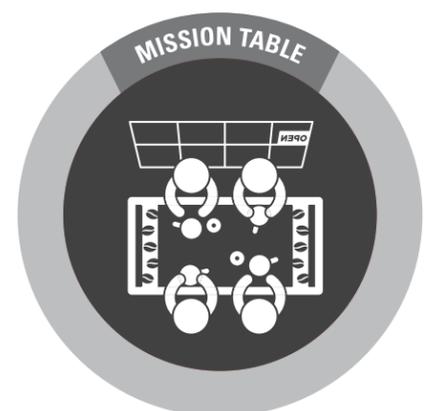
Seeking God
in Solitude



Finding God
in Friendship



Celebrating God
in Community



Reflecting God
in Relationships

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

Discussion Questions:

1. What sorts of people, or groups of people, do you view through the lens of cynicism?
2. Have you ever been enticed to blame God for your suffering? Why or why not?
3. How is the integrity of your life holding up? Do you feel that you are whole and undivided in your character?
4. Pray for someone you know who might be on the brink of losing hope, that they might sense the presence of God even in their suffering.

Additional Questions:

5. Do you think it becomes easier to be cynical towards another “people group” when you do not know them personally? Is it easier to be cynical when we generalize people into categories? Why do we do this?

Devotional Reading & Inward Reflection

- **Job 1-2** | What do you notice about Job’s integrity, especially in the face of evil wrecking his life?
- **Proverbs 9:10-12** | How does wisdom, or learning from those who are wise, help to protect us from evil when it creeps up on us like it did Job?
- **Lamentations 3:21-24** | Reflect with a posture of gratitude for all the Lord provides. Is it possible we miss out on the blessings that are happening in front of our eyes?
- **Luke 18:9-14** | Does the Pharisee display cynicism here? How so? Is it possible you have acted like the Pharisee before? What is so admirable about how the tax collector responded to his sin?

Self-Care Disciplines *(Excerpts from A Guidebook to Prayer by Mary Kate Morse)*

October Discipline: Prayer | Work Prayer (p. 42 & 47)

Humanity is bound together in our work. We get up each day, dress, hopefully eat breakfast and head out for our places of work or study, or begin our work in our homes. We are all one in this daily ritual of survival and meaning, and God is reflected in work. The creation narrative refers to God as “working.” God’s occupation was to create a good and loving world (Gen 2:2). We are made in God’s image. We are people who thrive on community, people who create, and now people who make a contribution. We are people who work.

Try these steps this week as you focus on work prayer.

- Whether you are retired or a student or a working person, choose the work environment that fits your situation.
- Spend a few days this week praying for that work environment while you are there. If you can, spend five to ten minutes at the beginning of the day or a few minutes a couple times a day, praying blessings, reminder prayers, and specific petitions for the work and for yourself as a worker.
- Take notes or keep a journal on your experience. Reflect on the place of prayer in your work. How did you experience work differently because of prayer? What were the outcomes of paying attention to God in your work?

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 discipline