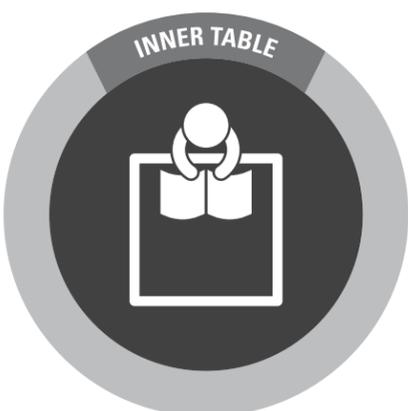


Sermon Notes

“Light Up the Night”
December 2nd, 2018

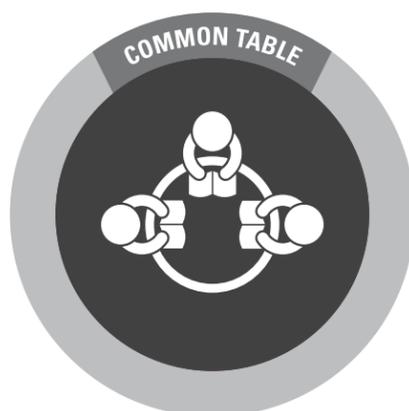


**First
Friends**
Church



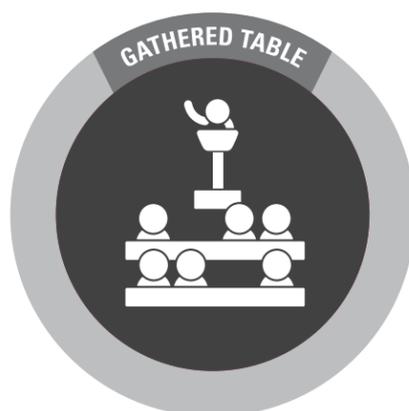
INNER TABLE

Seeking God
in Solitude



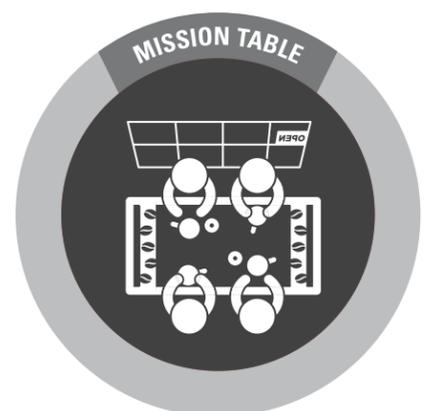
COMMON TABLE

Finding God
in Friendship



GATHERED TABLE

Celebrating God
in Community



MISSION TABLE

Reflecting God
in Relationships

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

Sermon Questions:

1. Ask God to give you a fresh understanding of, and appreciation for, the gift of Jesus during this Advent season.
2. What comes to mind when you think about the everyday, ordinary things of life? Boredom? Monotony? Or, an opportunity to be faithful in “little things?”
3. If you were to encounter an angel, surrounded by the glory of God, how do you think you would respond? Healthy reverence? Unhealthy fear? Overflowing joy?
4. Pray that you will both deeply understand and effectively reflect the glory of God present in your life as a disciple of Jesus this week.

Additional Questions:

5. God has a longstanding tradition of entrusting “outsiders” to carry on the good news. Think of those who you consider to be “outsiders” (like the shepherds). What can you learn from these folk?
6. Is your relationship with God driven more by fear or by love? Though revering God is a good thing, we were created by love for love. God is love! How might you make more room for the calming presence of God’s love in your relationship with him?

Devotional Reading & Inward Reflection

- **Luke 2:8-9** | What does it say about the kingdom of God that God would send an angel directly to the marginalized first to tell them about the good news?
- **Luke 16:1-15** | What little things has God given you to be faithful with? How might that be training you for bigger things? Which master are you serving?
- **Luke 1:11-13, 28-30** | In the situations we are most fearful, God tells us to not be afraid. What does it mean to you that God is always with you and never against you?
- **Exodus 24:15-18** | Why do you think Moses and the Israelites saw God’s presence in two different forms? Could it be that Moses’ heart was more open to the presence of God? Do you think having a love based narrative as opposed to a fear based narrative could change the way we interpret God’s presence?

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

December Discipline: Study | Repetition (p.64-65)

Study is a specific kind of experience in which through careful attention to reality the mind is enabled to move in a certain direction. The mind will always take on an order conforming to the order upon which it concentrates. Perhaps we observe a tree or read a book. We see it, feel it, understand it, draw conclusions from it. And as we do, our thought processes take on an order conforming to the order in the tree or book. When this is done with concentration, perception and repetition, ingrained habits of thought are formed.

Study involves four steps. Repetition, concentration, comprehension, reflection. Repetition regularly changes the mind in a specific direction, thus ingraining habits of thought. We may smile condescendingly at the old teaching method of recitation, but we must realize that sheer repetition without even understanding what is being repeated does affect the inner mind. Ingrained habits of thought can be formed by repetition alone, thus changing behavior.

We will use the story of Jesus’ birth in Luke 2 as a case study. Repeatedly read Luke 2:8-20 this week. Once a day is preferable. The goal is simply to get familiar with the passage. In the coming weeks, we will move into the concentration, comprehension, and reflection of this passage to see how we can best “study” a text holistically.