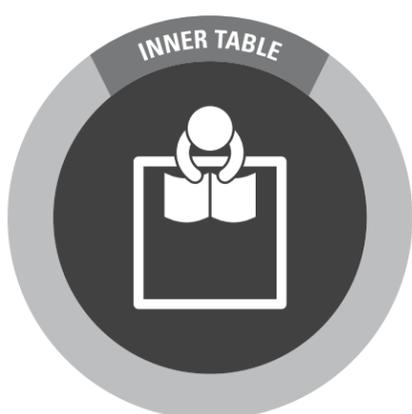


Sermon Notes

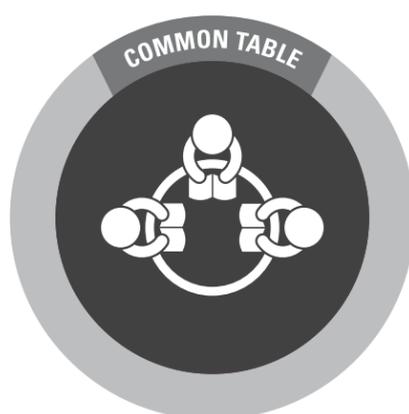
“Whatever is Admirable”
February 24th, 2019



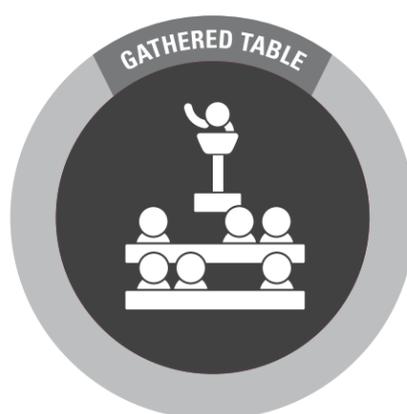
**First
Friends**
Church



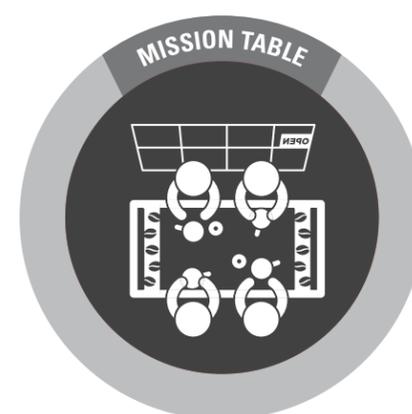
Seeking God
in Solitude



Finding God
in Friendship



Celebrating God
in Community



Reflecting God
in Relationships

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

Sermon Questions:

1. Think of someone whose faithfulness you admire. When might you have time this week to talk to them about what has led them to that good reputation?
2. Pray about when and how to exhibit one act of kindness this week.
3. Is there a habit or rhythm in your life from which you need to restrain yourself because it is damaging your reputation?
4. Within your existing relationships, is there someone who deserves honor? How can you tell/show them this week that they are an honorable person in your eyes?

Additional Questions:

5. Have you ever had someone slander you when you were trying to do the right thing? How did that make you feel? Do you think there is a possibility you have slandered someone else because you didn't fully grasp what they were saying or doing? How can you cultivate more empathy and understanding towards others?
6. How often do you worry about your reputation? Is it something that is meaningful to you? Do you sometimes value reputation over doing the right thing? How might worrying less about what others think lead us to doing the right thing more often?

Devotional Reading & Inward Reflection

- **Galatians 6:7-10** | Whenever we “sow into Jesus” we are doing the good kingdom work that God has set out for us. If we “sow into the flesh” we will reap destruction. How might you sow into Jesus this week?
- **Mark 14:1-9** | What resources do you have to give to the poor? You don't have to have money to give, often our time is the most valuable resource.
- **Acts 15:28-29** | Is there any part in your life where you are acting “holier than thou?” How might you operate with less judgment and more understanding? Remember, you can still show kindness to people who lead a different lifestyle than you.
- **Ephesians 6:2-3** | How are you honoring those around you? One thing to try might be remembering to recognize the image of God found within everyone you encounter.

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

February Discipline: Solitude & Silence | Goals (p.107)

The discipline of silence and solitude are interwoven into the DNA of a Christian person. We rely on them like one relies on food or water. Perhaps this is why so many folks feel spiritually malnourished or dehydrated because they are not opening themselves up to silence and solitude. Solitude is not simply the absence of noise but the absence of distraction. Whenever we are able to sit and rest in the presence of God, our eyes are opened in ways that we wouldn't have imagined before.

This week's self care discipline may be a good one to keep in your back pocket for later. Try making it a point to withdraw 4 times a year for 3-4 hours for the purpose of reorienting your life goals. This can easily be done in one evening. Stay late in your office or do it at home or find a quiet corner of the library. Reevaluate your goals and objectives in life. What do you want to have accomplished one year from now? Ten years from now? Our tendency is to overestimate what we can accomplish in one year and underestimate what we can accomplish in ten. Set realistic goals but be willing to dream, to stretch. In the quiet of those brief hours, listen to the thunder of God's silence.

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.