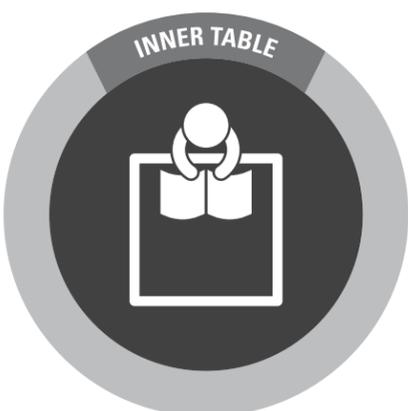


Sermon Notes

“Pruning”
June 9th, 2019

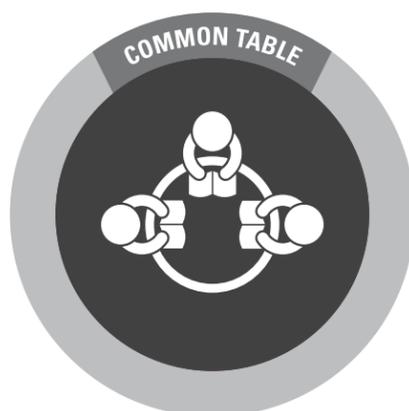


**First
Friends**
Church



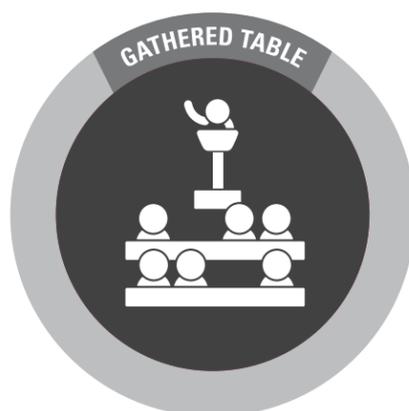
INNER TABLE

Seeking God
in Solitude



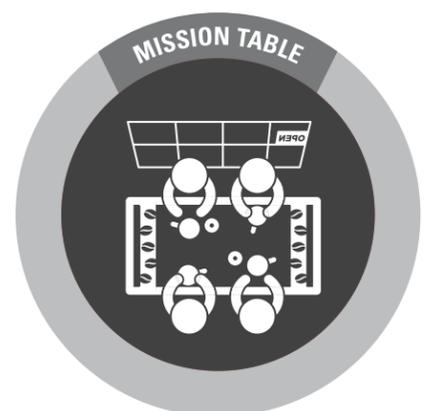
COMMON TABLE

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. Are you able to "remain" in Christ considering the speed and content of your life currently?
2. If our fruitfulness as Christians is understood in terms of love and sacrifice, how fruitful has the last week of your life been? The last month?
3. Is there something you've been saying "yes" to that is choking out your joy, and needs to hear a "no" instead? Or at least a "not right now?"
4. Which part of the "full armor of God" needs the most attention in your life?
5. Pray for someone you know who is struggling with pain, loss or sorrow, that they would be able to trust any pruning work God might be doing.

Additional Questions:

6. Is it easy to forget in your "successes" where your nourishment comes from? Do you practice a posture of thankfulness towards God who is the giver of all good things?
7. Are you going through a "pruning" process right now in your life where things don't seem all put together as you think they should? Is it difficult to trust God in these moments? How might looking at the bigger picture help?

Devotional Reading & Inward Reflection

- **John 15:1-8** | Jesus emphasizes the phrase "remain in me." What does it look like to "remain" in Jesus on a daily basis? Think outside the box for some creative ways to do this that align with your interests. Example: If you like to be outdoors, do a prayerful hike or make gardening a prayerful exercise.
- **Job 1 & 42** | We never want to assume that God causes the bad things to happen in our lives. God is not out to get us. But how are you allowing God to prune you during these times where all hope seems to be lost?
- **Ephesians 6:10-17** | Do you wield the "armor of God" against flesh and blood instead of principalities and powers? How might we channel this armor properly?
- **2 Timothy 4:2** | What does it look like to be prepared "in season and out of season?"

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

June Discipline: Steps into Worship | "Presence & Practice" (p.158,171)

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.

Third, find ways to really prepare yourself for the gathered experience of worship. Be rested. Have a time of an inward examination and confession prior to the gathering. Allow yourself to let go of all inner distractions so that you may participate as your fullest self.

Fourth, have the willingness to be gathered in the power of the Lord. That is, as an individual I must learn to let go of *my* agenda, of *my* concern, of *my* being blessed, of *my* hearing the word of God. The language of the gathered fellowship is not "I," but "we." There is a submission to the ways of God. There is a submission to one another in the Christian fellowship. There is a desire for God's life to rise up in the group, not just within the individual. Become of one mind, of one accord.

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.