

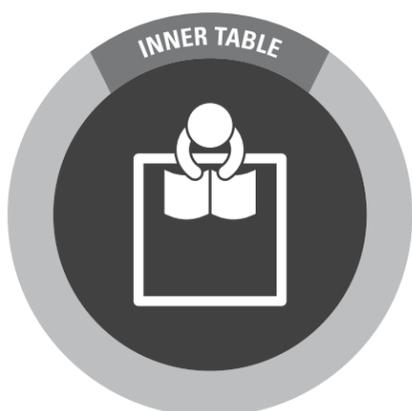
# Sermon Notes



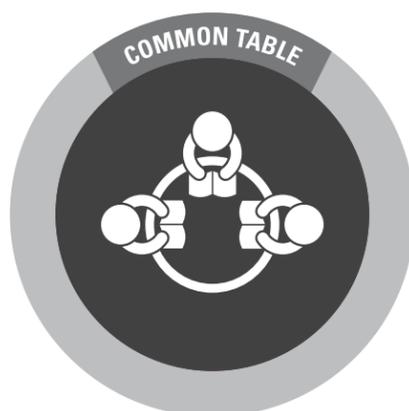
**First  
Friends  
Church**

“Sifted”

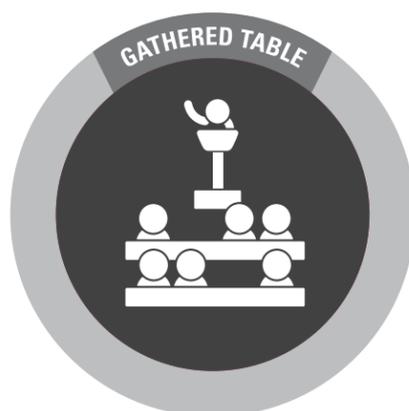
November 3rd, 2019



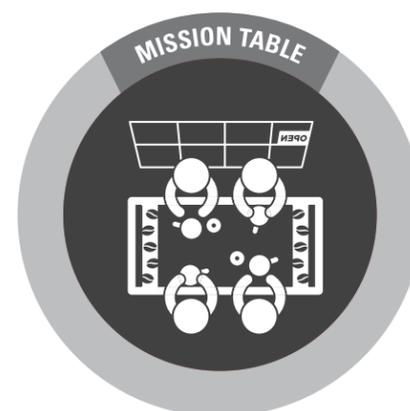
*Seeking God*  
in Solitude



*Finding God*  
in Friendship



*Celebrating God*  
in Community



*Reflecting God*  
in Relationships

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

### Discussion Questions:

1. Thank God that he knows you infinitely more intimately than the forces of evil that seek to sift you!
2. Has your faith been stumbling or faltering lately? You are not a failure! Ask God to reveal the resurrection power of Jesus in your life to encourage you.
3. Looking back on your life, where might there have been seasons of sifting? What did you learn or experience that could strengthen someone else?
4. What are some of your strongest character traits? How might they be used against you during a time of sifting?

### Additional Questions:

5. Have you ever wondered why God would allow “sifting” to happen in your life? Have you ever wondered if God was causing it? Does reframing the root cause of “sifting” from God to the “evil forces” change your perspective?
6. Why is it important to know the difference between having a “faltering faith” and being a failure?

## Devotional Reading & Inward Reflection

- **Luke 22:31-34** | Have you ever displayed an “overly-eager” faith like Peter? Why is it important to “count the cost” of discipleship?
- **Amos 9:9** | This was a prophetic word to “sift” out all those who were causing injustice. Is it possible that, even today, we need to “sift” (call out) those who are bringing harm to others?
- **Romans 8:18-30** | Even though we live in a broken world, we have reason to hope. What does hope look like for you?
- **John 17:20-23** | What does it mean to you that Jesus is praying and interceding for you? Do you view Jesus as a friend who cares?

## Self-Care Disciplines

### November Discipline: Fasting | Media Fast

Fasting is an excellent spiritual practice to determine the areas in our lives where we have too much excess. In our current cultural climate, we have been conditioned to become consumers. If you think about it, consider everything you “consume” in a week. It’s a lot! We have also been trained to live without “margins” in our lives. Margins are those spaces where we have nothing planned and have time in between stuff or at the beginning and ending of each day. It’s no wonder we are so stressed when we consistently go right from one thing to the next. We have created a false good that busyness = success. But consider all the times Jesus retreated to spend time in rest and prayer.

This week, we are going to focus on fasting from media. We spend so much time in front of TV’s and on our phones. While these devices are great, they can often control us. Think of one thing in particular (a show, an app on your phone, TV before bed, etc.) that you can give up for a few days this week. After doing so, consider if you felt more at peace without it. Also, if you notice during the process that you are struggling without it, that could signal that you may be developing a reliance on this particular thing. Through all of this, ask that the presence of Jesus would be with you.

**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**