

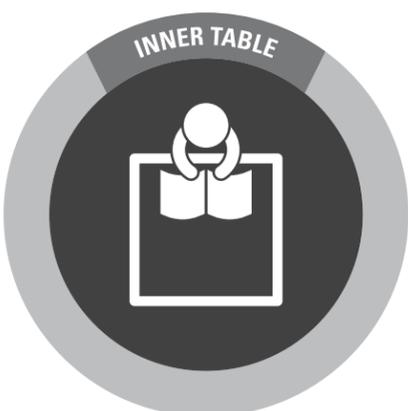
Sermon Notes



**First
Friends
Church**

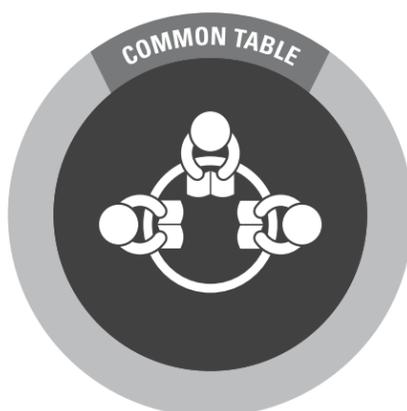
“Restart”

December 22nd, 2019



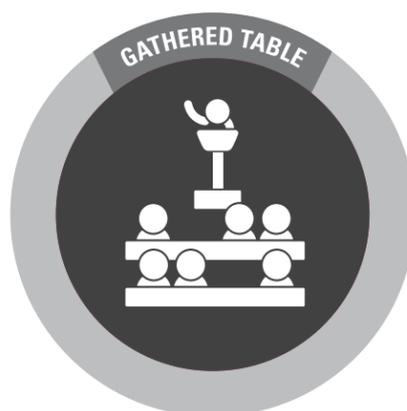
INNER TABLE

Seeking God
in Solitude



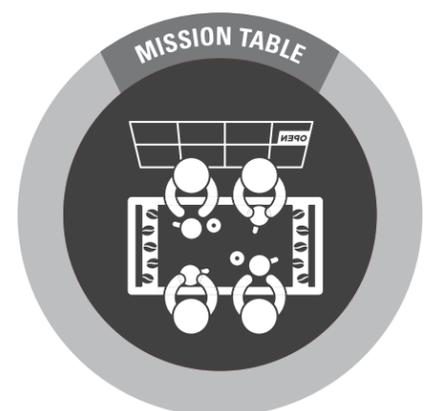
COMMON TABLE

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)*

Discussion Questions:

1. Does your home give you a sense of peace and settledness? If not, what changes can you make encourage that kind of environment?
2. What sort of "season of life" are you in right now? Are you in a season that feels like an opportunity to restart some aspect of life?
3. Is your life not what you expected it would be at this point? Does it seem like you're in a place that is "less than" where you should be? Ask God how you might need to learn and grow as he prepares you for what is coming next.

Additional Questions:

4. Does your life take you to places where you regularly interact with those who are marginalized? If not, where can you go to spend time with people who have been disenfranchised like Jesus did?
5. As we enter a new year and decade, it is easy to make a commitment to "starting over" but it is another thing to follow through with that commitment. What can you do to help make sure your new commitments do not fizzle out?

Devotional Reading & Inward Reflection

- **Matthew 2:19-23** | Is it possible that you romanticize where and to what God is calling you towards like Joseph and Mary assuming the call was to Judea instead of to Nazareth? Are you okay with a humble calling?
- **Ecclesiastes 3:1-11** | Are you allowing yourself to be present in whatever season you're in? Do you try to rush into the next season before the current one is complete?
- **Isaiah 53:2-3** | What does it say about God that he would choose this kind of humility during his incarnation?
- **Philippians 2:5-11** | Why do you think humanity is so enamored with "exaltation" when God chose to make himself "nothing?"

Self-Care Disciplines *(Excerpts from Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster)* December Discipline: Study | Reflection (p.66)

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. Although comprehension defines what we are studying, reflection defines the *significance* of what we are studying. To reflect, to ruminate, on the events of our time leads us to the inner reality of those events. Reflection brings us to see things from God's perspective. In reflection we come to understand not only our subject matter, but ourselves. Jesus speaks often of ears that do not hear and eyes that do not see. When we ponder the meaning of what we study, we come to hear and see in a new way.

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