

Service for Week 14th -20th July 2025

By Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer.

Loving God, we thank you that you are at work in our lives, constantly looking to refashion us in your image.

We praise you that, despite our lack of faith, our many faults, and our sometimes wilful disobedience, you never give up, patiently looking to re-create us through the power of your Holy Spirit.

Come to us now in all our weakness, and by your grace, renew, redeem and restore us in the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass
against us.

And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory
for ever and ever.

Amen

Bible Reading Luke 10:38 -42

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called

Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

Mary and Martha were two sisters who lived in Bethany. They had a brother Lazarus –who you may remember that when Lazarus was very sick and had died Jesus came and brought him back to life. This family Mary, Martha and Lazarus was a family that Jesus was very fond of and got close to, we know this because they are mentioned in several of the gospels.

In the gospels we hear a lot about the disciples who were men because at that time it was a totally male orientated society - women did not have any status or standing in the Jewish community at that time so when we do hear about women in the bible, they are not the main characters. However, in reality Jesus had many women disciples and followers—even though we don't hear

much about them. The women followers of Jesus would have studied the scriptures (what we now call the Old Testament) and they listened to the teachings of Jesus and gone out and about preaching themselves. Some of these women were involved in business and were relatively wealthy, like one we know about called Lidia who dyed cloth for a living. Lidia opened up her large house for the disciples to meet and to hold services. These women also cared for the sick and provided food for the disciples.

Mary, Martha's sister was one such woman who was a disciple of Jesus. Later on in Jesus's life it is thought it may have been the same Mary of Bethany who in John's gospel account came and washed Jesus' feet and dried them with her hair.

On the day when Jesus and his followers went to visit Mary and Martha in Bethany it was Martha who welcomed them and arranged for their feet to be washed and then went off to prepare food for them to eat. But Mary wanted to hear what Jesus had to say- she wanted to sit and listen to his teachings.

Martha as you can imagine got a bit cross – there she was busy preparing food and getting things ready and her sister was just sitting there listening. She was so fed up she came through and spoke to Jesus - don't you care

that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" she said.

But Jesus doesn't tell Mary to go and help her sister – instead Jesus used this opportunity to teach them, and us, about what our priorities in life should be . He says to Martha 'you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed.' Martha was anxious about preparing the food for everyone and being hospitable to these visitors – but Jesus tells her that there are more important things in this life. Her sister Mary is ignoring what is going on around her and listening carefully to what Jesus is saying.

And there are times in life when for us it is important to close our ears to the things that are going on around us – also to stop thinking for a moment about our own troubles and needs – and to open our hearts and minds to God to feel his presence with us and listen to what God may be saying to us. If we are able to do that even for a moment as Jesus says – what we have chosen is better –and it will not be taken away from us.

Amen

Closing Prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, teach me that if I would live for *you*, you must first live in *me*.

Amen. Prayers inspired by 'Prayerfully Yours' by Nick Fawcett