

## A Different Portion

**Intro.** This story goes on in every home in the world. “Mom/Dad, he’s not helping me!” In my home it was the dishes; two of the three had to work together. One seemed to disappear. It is our complaint at work or school when we feel someone is not pulling their weight. It can be true. But sometimes we are resentful of others and try to put blame for our troubles on someone else.

**I.** This story is found only in Luke’s gospel. Matthew and Mark don’t have it. John’s gospel has the story of the sisters and their brother Lazarus and a previous dinner. There is no Lazarus here and no mention of a previous friendship or dinner. There is no introduction. Right after the lawyer recognized who his neighbor was, the Lord continued his journey, entered a village where Martha welcomed

him to her home. This is the example of the custom of hospitality to a traveler. The Lord accepted a meal with the sisters while the disciples likely split up to other homes for dinner. It was nice break from the crowds, a quiet meal and different conversation. The steps for welcoming a guest haven’t changed in two thousand years. The hosts meet the guest at the door, offer them a comfortable seat and ask if they would like something to drink. The hosts don’t all stay in the living room; somebody had to prepare the meal. Unless dinner is take out or delivery. In the story *both* sisters were being hospitable. Martha put a lot of pressure on herself making a big dinner. The Lord would have been just as happy with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich; or honey, bread and a glass of wine. Martha tried to multi-task: cook the meat, make the salad, pour the wine, set the table and

listen to the Lord at the same time. It didn't work. Multi-tasking is a myth. An article recently suggested we cannot really give our full and total attention to more than one thing at a time. One example is driving and texting. Another is trying to talk with someone who is reading or watching television. One thing gets less attention and it is usually the person.

**Concl.** Of all the things we put on our daily schedules, what is really necessary? Time with family or friends? Work or school? Checking Facebook or snapchat. Farther down the list may be prayer and spiritual reading. Getting to know the neighbor. If we are honest there is a lot of unnecessary activity that distracts us from what is really needed. Sometimes I add distractions on purpose so I can avoid other things. The Lord said

only one thing was needed. It might be difficult to narrow it down to one thing in our whole day. How about if we narrow it down to one thing at a time, in the present moment? And make it not about ourselves. If that one thing is to be in the presence of God, put it at the beginning of our day. A lot of stress would disappear and by some “miracle” the most important things on our lists will probably get done. We can then receive the gift that God is offering us: his presence. All the Lord wanted from Martha and Mary was their presence. The dinner was a bonus.

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July 21, 2019