

**Sunday 18th July 2004,
Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
Rob Lamerton**

Readings:

- Amos 8:1-12
- Psalm 52
- Colossians 1.15-29
- Luke 10.38-42

Hymns: TIS: 693, 136, 626, 187

Do you have somewhere to go
--- a favourite place

when you want some space to think and reflect

OR do you find working in the garden
OR the shed
the golf course
or bush

Sandy often says she wishes she had a place where she could withdraw to think

Also, I was talking to Rosemary who told me of a weekend at the coast with son Adrian and friends --- and in that time some things about what she wanted to do became clearer to her.

Some people seem to be able to think in the midst of busy-ness, but most of us need some place
some peace

We need to withdraw from the routine to see more clearly what our part in God's world is meant to be.

A time of Retreat
Holiday

OR Daily Meditation --- NOT a shutting down, but an opening up to God's spirit.

--- silent

--- guided

Today's gospel story as well as drawing the comparison between Mary's listening and simpling BEING with Jesus
and Martha's busyness

ALSO highlights the fact that friendship --- being with and listening to one another, is a valid way of God's
speaking
refreshing
and renewing.

Mary seems to draw as much from BEING with Jesus as he does from BEING with Mary --- and we need to remember that this very homely scene occurs for Jesus as he faces up to his hardest task...

How important friendship is as we face difficult choices.

How important it is sometimes NOT to give advice but to let God's Holy Spirit guide the person to the right choice in the being and listening reflecting

How annoying it is on those occasions to have the distraction of ceaseless motion!

Occasionally however, when our minds are restless and anxious, it is good to have something to do.

In this story it is Mary's quietness which is commended!

Have you noticed how this story follows immediately on from the story of the Good Samaritan where Jesus advises ACTION?

How does one inherit eternal life?

Love God and love your neighbour
Who is the neighbour?
The one who showed mercy!
God and DO likewise!

[*an extra bit* --- Levite: books and law
Priest: tradition of sacrifice
word//sacrament [Mercy]]

Possibly the stories are put together to counteract the idea that Christianity is an activist faith; that eternal life is only about doing!

AND THEN TODAY'S READING
tells us that it is also about simply being!
with Jesus.

We need to practise the art of simply being!
as well as the art of doing!

I am so grateful for the friendship of people who allow me to BE!

(friendship in Albury --- went to watch football on Saturday afternoons....)

WE SAY: We are the Body of Christ

In our relationships we are sometimes called

to be the agents of Jesus
speaking words of guidance
encouragement
correction
advice
or being the listening Jesus

And also

to be like Mary
simply to be with Jesus
listening to his Spirit
wondering about his call
thinking about his way
praying for his love and strength

Some of us will be more like Martha than Mary --- the balance of our discipleship will be more about action than reflection.

Fortunately we balance each other in the Christian family --- both are needed and we should always value the spirituality and insights of others within the body of Christ.

Amos points out that the lack of Justice among God's people will bring about a famine "of hearing the words of the Lord" --- if people do not care for people then they will not hear God's voice.

The psalmist points to a people who

love evil and lying
words that hurt and deceit.

In contrast he trusts God's mercy and is like a green olive tree ---
alive and flourishing

giving thanks
declaring God's goodness

In Colossians, Paul points out that like the psalmist we come to life and peace in Christ - hostility is overcome, estrangement is ended and relationship established with God.