*Home Group Notes* **One-to-one**

**John 11** Martha and Mary

**Introduction**

Read Ecclesiastes 7:1-4. Why is it wise to prefer to go to funerals than to wild parties? Do you value a funeral wake more than a dance? Have you had a good conversation at a funeral?

1. 11:3 says Lazarus was known by his sisters to be ‘the one Jesus loves’. 11:5 says Jesus loved Martha, Mary and Lazarus. These references put their friendship with Jesus as similarly close and special as the gospel writer John’s own friendship with Jesus. Why was this (18)? How did John often describe himself?
2. Do you find it easier or harder to have significant spiritual one-to-one conversations with loved ones compared with more casual acquaintances? Why might that be? What are the plusses and minuses of one-to-ones with people we know all too well?

**Hear from God and apply these things to your life**

1. **Read v.17-37** Jesus had two one-to-ones: intimate conversations first with Martha and then with Mary. Given that they started with exactly the same anguished outburst (21, 32), are you surprised that the conversations are so different?
2. How does Jesus’ close acquaintance with each of the sisters and his relational wisdom (or emotional intelligence) on the day enable him to respond very differently to the same presenting challenge?
3. What is happening in the hearts of the sisters which causes Jesus to push against Martha’s despair and just cry with Mary’s sadness?
4. Are you good at recognising the flow of people’s hearts? How weak or strong is your relational wisdom (or emotional intelligence)?
5. In 21-22 Martha reveals her heart is a battleground of hope and despair. How does Jesus help the fight against despair and along the path to true hope?
6. How does Jesus help us recognise that a general belief in resurrection is insufficient? What is clearer and confidence-building about a personal belief in Jesus as the resurrection?
7. What is your answer to Jesus’ question in v.26? How does your belief in Jesus as the resurrection and the life make all the difference?
8. Put alongside Jesus’ raising of Lazarus in 38-44, does this scripture help you consider Jesus’ claim to be truly God?
9. **Read v.32-37** With Mary, Jesus says little but he does respond to the flow of her heart’s sadness. What does he do? Does he go against the flow, as with Martha’s doubt & despair? Or with the flow?
10. How might this scripture be a strong pointer to Jesus’ full humanity? How did others react? If you are in a conversation about Jesus being fully God and fully human, how might you illustrate the aspect of Jesus’ wholesome humanity from here?
11. Dylan Thomas wrote about the experience of loss: ‘Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light.’ In v.8 the Greek behind ‘deeply moved’ means ‘a bellow of rage’. Who or what is Jesus angry at? How does he follow through?
12. As John’s gospel is written so that readers may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing have life in his name, does chapter 11 help in that aim?

***Prayer Points***

*Give thanks for Jesus’ inspirational relational approach to one-to-ones*

*Pray for those experiencing grief and loss and for those ministering, such as our bereavement team, clergy, office, verger/organist/tea servers*

*Pray for those preparing for our church membership course and those preparing for confirmation*

*Pray for our Brightstars and WLTDO toddler groups*