



## Session 2: Decelerate



### Hurry is one of the great enemies of the spiritual life.

In this session we explore the difference between busy and hurry. Many of us feel overcommitted and too busy in our daily lives. Being busy isn't wrong, some of us like to be busy – but hurry is different. Hurry is living at speed and affects the condition of our soul. Hurry can keep us from enjoying life with God and others.

#### Previous session review

- Recap on your experiences of last week's challenge. How did it go? Was it helpful?
- If you weren't able to try the challenge, explore the question: Where and how did you experience God last week?

## Read

*Read the passage several times through, slowly and prayerfully. It might help to use your imagination to picture the scene. At the end of the text you will find helpful background information in our 'Setting the Scene' section.*

*As you read, look out for shockers and blockers.*

**Shockers** – a phrase, word, image or something from the text that resonates, stands out or connects with you.

**Blockers** – something from the text that raises questions for you.

### Luke 10.38-42

Mary and Martha

The Lord and his disciples were travelling along and came to a village.

When they got there, a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.

She had a sister named Mary, who sat down in front of the Lord and was listening to what he said.

Martha was worried about all that had to be done. Finally, she went to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it bother you that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!"

The Lord answered, "Martha, Martha! You are worried and upset about so many things, but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen what is best, and it will not be taken away from her."

#### Setting the scene:

- The village is Bethany – about two miles from Jerusalem. Martha and Mary lived together in the house. Martha is possibly the owner of the house and the impression we get is that she is the older sister.
- Hospitality was culturally important. People were expected to look after travellers. Both Mary and Martha are equally responsible for looking after guests.
- Being a hostess involved preparing an elaborate meal for guests and here there were many – Jesus and his disciples! With much to prepare, Martha was busy, distracted and upset that Mary was not helping her.
- Jesus wanted the best for Martha, and she was in danger of missing it. He would not be in her home for long, and he wanted her to be with him, not rushing around serving him.

## Reflect

*After you have all had time to read the text, pause and be still to listen to God through the Scriptures.*

*Begin your reflection time by each naming your shockers and blockers. Listen carefully to each other, share your thoughts and reflect on this passage together.*

### You might also like to explore these questions:

**Q1.** How can we avoid hurry even when we are busy?

**Q2.** Are you more able to relate to Mary or Martha in this story?  
How would you have behaved in the same situation?



'For most of us, the great danger is not that we will renounce our faith. It is that we will become so distracted and rushed and preoccupied that we will settle for a mediocre version of it. We will just skim our lives instead of actually living them.'

*John Ortberg*



## Respond

*This session looks at the importance of learning to slow down and be present to God – even when life is busy. As a group, either create a challenge to help you to find times where you can decelerate and be present to God and others, or choose one of the following:*

### Challenge ideas:

#### 1. Press Pause

Each time you put on the kettle to make a drink, be still and quiet while you wait for it to boil and remember that God is with you.

#### 2. Evening Rush Hour

Stop rushing your children through bath time and into bed. Enjoy spending time with them, listen to them and watch them and then read a bedtime story slowly (and again if they want it!).

#### 3. Inside Lane

Over the next week, deliberately drive in the slow lane. Instead of trying to overtake everyone, enjoy the feeling of taking it slowly.

#### 4. Slow Food

For a week, eat slowly. Enjoy the taste and texture of every mouthful of food. Chew it thoroughly before you swallow and take the next mouthful.

## Group Prayer

Commit to pray for each other this week. Pray for God's peace to be with you in your hearts, minds, homes and places you work.

Pray that each will person will find a richer experience of God as you practice decelerating.