

A Gracious Host

By Jane Fryar

Bring out the best china. The linen napkins, too! And a thorough housecleaning. Wipe down every cobweb. Mop all the floors, and not with that silly stick mop, either! Get down on your knees so you can spot the spots that lie partially hidden beneath the cabinets.

Oh, and the menu. Yes, the meal must be as special as our guest. Whatever shall we serve?

Martha's thoughts raced full throttle as soon as she heard Jesus was coming. We don't know if she sent a formal invitation or if the visit happened as one of those "I-just-found-myself-in-the-neighborhood" serendipities that brighten everyday life.



However it happened, Martha graciously welcomed the Lord into her home (Luke 10:38). The house did not belong to Brother Lazarus; it was Martha's. Single women commonly own homes in our day, but not in Martha's.

Something else sets Martha apart as uncommon: She brooks no nonsense. Plainspoken, when she catches Mary shirking, Martha confronts the problem. She takes her case to the Rabbi himself, her honored guest. And she leaves no doubt that she expects immediate justice (v. 40): "*Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself?*"

Lord, don't you care ... ? For Martha, to care is to act: to make the meal, mop the floor, buy the house for one's family members, confront the problem. In her zeal, Martha does not stop to think about what she's really said.

Jesus cares, cares indeed! But not about the work and who's doing it. Instead, He cares about Martha's anxiety, about the burden she has placed on herself under the guise of serving Him.

Jesus wants nothing, absolutely nothing, to come between Martha and the relationship He was dying to establish (or to come between us and relationship He did die to establish)!

It was Martha's house, but Jesus was the host. He had prepared a banquet of most tender grace. He served up a big slice to Mary and to Martha. Still now, today, He serves it.

Won't you come on in?

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