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While journeying on horseback one day, St Benedict met a peasant walking along the road. 'You've got an easy job,' said the peasant, 'If I became a man of prayer like you, then I too would be travelling on horseback.' 'You think praying is easy,' replied the Saint. 'If you can say one "Our Father" without any distractions, you can have my horse.' 'It's a bargain,' said the surprised peasant. Closing his eyes and folding his hands he began praying out loud: 'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come.' Suddenly he stopped short looked up and said: 'Can I have the saddle and bridle too'?

I always feel that Mary and Martha's home was a kind of sanctuary where Jesus could take time out to be among his friends especially if he had things weighting on his mind. The Bible tells us that Jesus loved Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus. I wonder why he was so fond of them. Maybe because they allowed him space and time to unwind and share with them his innermost thoughts and feelings. In the first reading Abraham and Sarah did the same bending over backwards to accommodate their three mysterious visitors who turned up at their tent unannounced.

Do we ever make space in our lives for people who could do with a listening ear especially if they catch us on the hop and we're not expecting them. Loving someone is not just about helping them in a time of crisis, like the Good Samaritan in last Sunday's gospel, but also about making space and time for them on a more mundane level and especially if it inconvenient to us.

But before this happens it is important to make space and time for God in our busy lives. It mentions a number of times in the Gospel that Jesus took time out for prayer usually in a place where he wasn't likely to be disturbed. According to the old catechism answer prayer is 'a raising up of the mind and heart

to God'. That simply cannot be done if our minds are all over the place. How can we raise up a restless heart to God if it is preoccupied with other things?

The gospel tells us that Mary sat down at the Lord's feet and listened to his words. Blaise Pascal, the renowned 17th century philosopher and mathematician, wrote that "All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone."

If that was true of the 17th century, how much more relevant is it for modern man. Even Sunday rest, which the Church calls for, is paid lip service to by many. We need to make uninterrupted space and time for God if we are ever going to give quality time to others.

Martha and Mary were equally loved by Jesus. On this occasion he gently reminds Martha that Mary had chosen the better part on this occasion and it would be a shame to take it from her.