

...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembly together...but encouraging one another.
Heb 10:24-25

Share the teaching
Guard the sharing

Male Call

February 15, 2008—*The Prodigal Son—Part II—the Older Son*

6:00 – 6:05	Coffee & Donuts Opening Prayer
6:05 – 7:00	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Reflections on the younger son... 2) Context of the parable—what is the precipitating event? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Lk 15:1-3 3) The Prodigal Son <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Luke 15:11-32 4) Rembrandt's <i>The Return of the Prodigal Son</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Brief reflection on the painting 5) The Older Son <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Staying Home <p>Neither Jewish nor Roman law permitted the father to have the arbitrary disposal of all his estate. The property was entailed on the sons at the father's death, the daughter's not being allowed to inherit unless there were no sons (cf. Genesis 31:14; Numbers 27:8). The firstborn son received a double-share of the inheritance.¹</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) What do you think the older son felt towards the younger son? Why? ii) What do you think the older son felt toward the father? Why? iii) What do you think others felt toward the older son? Why? iv) What do you think the older son felt about himself? Why? b) Leaving Home <p><i>"Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might</i></p>

¹Freeman, J. M., & Chadwick, H. J. (1998). *Manners & customs of the Bible*. "Rewritten and updated by Harold J. Chadwick"--Cover.; Includes index. (Rev. ed.) (508). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers.

	<p><i>celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!</i>' (ESV)</p> <p>i) Imagine yourself as the older brother:</p> <p>(1) How do you want your father to respond?</p> <p>(2) What would the younger son have to do to be forgiven by you?</p> <p>ii) In the spiritual sense, how has the older son left home?</p> <p>iii) Read Mk 10:28-31; Mt 20:1-16</p> <p>(1) How are Peter and the first workers similar to the older son?</p> <p>c) Returning home</p> <p><i>“And he said to him, ‘Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. ‘But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.’”</i> (ESV)</p> <p>i) What choice must the older son make?</p> <p>ii) Why is repentance necessary for the older son do to return home?</p> <p>iii) What is necessary for both sons to begin to establish a deep, loving relationship with their father and each other?</p> <p>6) For personal reflection</p> <p>a) In what ways are you like the older brother?</p> <p>b) Do you really want to return home?</p> <p>c) Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you one or more feelings or self-conceptions you have that are not part of who God created you to be.</p> <p>7) Journey together</p> <p>a) With a partner, talk about some of the things that came to your mind.</p> <p>b) Ask each other how you can pray for the other.</p> <p>c) Pray for each other.</p>
7:00	Closing Prayer

Further reading:

- *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming*, Henri Nouwen
- *The Better Part*, Thomas Keating