




SISTERHOOD LOUNGE ROOM

From our lounge room to yours


With Nicola Douglass...



We are so excited that you are joining us for this special edition of the Sisterhood Lounge Room. In this episode Maureen and Mary asked Nicola questions that were sent through from across the UK Sisterhood community. As you watch this episode, we have highlighted the key scriptures, thoughts, as well as a few questions that you can use in your group, or in your own personal devotion ... enjoy.

No one ever outgrows scripture; the book just widens and deepens with our years.
Charles Spurgeon

Q -Mary began by asking Nicola if reading and teaching the bible has always come naturally to her?



Nicola shared that reading the bible came from a place of shame in her early years of faith. She struggled to have a personal relationship with scripture. Every time she picked up her bible and did not understand what she was reading, she would feel like a failure. Unsatisfied with this, she enrolled into bible college which gave her a foundational understanding, but one book had a profound impact on her: 'The miracle of the scarlet thread' by Dr Richard Booker. She experienced a grand awakening, and finally saw that all the puzzle pieces fitted together unveiling Jesus throughout the Old and the New Testament. Nicola concluded by saying that she now loves to teach and unpack the bible for those who may feel the same as she once did.

Q - Maureen asked Nicola that if someone watching this episode themselves struggled with reading the bible, what advice would she give them.

Nicola said to remember why you are reading the bible. Embracing scripture is not a religious obligation but a way for you to embrace your relationship with Jesus. It is His love letter to you and His love for humanity. Additionally, discover what works best for you in the season you are in. There are many resources and platforms out there with devotional plans and content to suit every season. Just focus on your intimacy and relationship with Jesus.

Q - What is your current relationship with scripture?

Q -If you desire to grow in your understanding of scripture, take some time to pray and plan how you can go about this.

Q - What devotional plans or content have you used recently that you would recommend? Share it with a friend and ask for theirs.


If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.


Matthew 16:24

Q -Mary mentioned that as a church we are focusing on discipleship and asked Nicola to explain what discipleship means, and to talk through her personal journey of discipleship.

Nicola began by saying that to be a Christian is to be a disciple. Biblically a disciple is more than a student but a person who gives themselves over to following and learning from their teacher. For us that's Jesus. Nicola shared Matthew 16:24 where Jesus outlines three things:




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1. Giving up on your own way and walking away from doing everything in your own strength.
 2. Taking up the cross, dying to self, and surrendering.
 3. 'Follow me' doesn't happen in a moment, it is a continual process. Over time and with commitment we are being sanctified and becoming like him.



Nicola concluded that the personal discipleship journey for her is a daily decision to follow Christ, to become more like Him, to know what Jesus is doing, and what He is asking and directing her to do.

Q -Maureen asked Nicola if she has a mentor and how they have impacted her life?

Nicola explained that this was something she desired in her 20's but it did not materialise. Instead, many people have shaped her formation, both those she knows and those she has admired from afar. She has trusted their wisdom through the fruit of their life, and the longevity of their ministries. Nicola has had a couple of people that she has been able to call on in the past and said that sometimes mentors may be for a season or for a specific purpose.




Nicola said that in a mentor she looks for longevity, a fruitfulness, and which other faithful people are gleaning from them. She reminded us that to be teachable is key. She warned us to be careful about just absorbing someone's content, without knowing their longevity and fruit, as there is so much out there.

Q - Hearing Nicola's explanation of what discipleship is, how would you like your discipleship journey to grow? What adjustments might you need to make?

Q - Who are the mentors in your life and how have they helped in your formation? What adjustments might you need to make here?

Q - How can you become more teachable in this next season?

We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.
- 2 Corinthians 4:7




Q -Mary reflected on Nicola previously sharing her story about stepping into her calling and having to overcome shyness in becoming a pastor. She asked Nicola where she is currently in her journey today.

Nicola said that when she was studying cellular molecular biology and excelling in her studies, she knew deep down that it was not her calling. She described it like an internal itch that was not being scratched and the main reason she shied away from ministry was insecurity.

She placed too much pressure on herself but then began to understand that God is not dependent on us, instead He chooses to work through us. She explained that if God calls you to it, He's going to grace you for it, and to trust that God doesn't call you into something to see you fail, but rather to take small steps of faith and grow. Nicola concluded by saying she has never been more fulfilled and knows right now she is doing the thing she was put on this planet for.

Q -Maureen asked Nicola if she still has doubts and insecurities.

Nicola said that she absolutely does. The difference is that 20 years ago fear and doubt used to cripple and control her, but now she has made the decision to say yes to opportunities and tasks and to do them scared. Nicola describes an encounter with God where he said to her that he wanted her to never say no to doing something because she felt fearful, and



she made the decision then to always say yes to God. She has grown her confidence and faith that God will show up. This has taught her not to rely on her herself but on His strength and grace. Nicola said that 2 Corinthians 4:7 explains that we are all broken vessels and in our weakness it is his power that fills us. Mary agreed and commented that it takes courage. Nicola likened it to the story of Peter stepping out of the boat. Taking that first step into the unknown can be scary but Jesus was there, and He is there for us always.

Q - Is there currently something you are not doing because fear and doubt has control over you?

Q - Does hearing, 'if God has called you to it, He will grace you for it' fill you confidence to step out of your boat?

Q - We all have a unique purpose and calling. Does hearing Nicola describe what she is currently doing as "the thing she was put on this planet for" unearth dreams inside you that have potentially laid dormant for a while?

Q - Mary asked Nicola to share how she maintains a healthy work life balance?

Nicola said that it begins with knowing what the priorities and non-negotiables are in your life. These can sometimes be seasonal. Nicola explained that when she was studying, writing her thesis was a priority, but her family is always the non-negotiable. There is always a juggle but from experience and running busy lives she and her husband Tim have learned to plan and block out time for what's important. Nicola said that without planning, all the biggest loudest things will take over and you will feel like they are running your life.

There are also intentional decisions that she has built into her weekly rhythm. For example, Saturday nights she and her family stay at home so they can bring their best to Sundays.

Nicola ended by saying that knowing what your values, priorities, and non-negotiables are, is the key so you can decide what needs your attention and schedule your time around those, otherwise your schedule will run you.

Q -Maureen asked Nicola how she discerns the will of God in her life?

Nicola began by saying that people may hear and discern the voice of God in different ways, but in her experience the first thing is learn how to hear the voice of God. It is an art and it comes over time, but God is a teacher, and He confirms when He is speaking to you. Nicola used the example of living with people. When you live with someone you learn to recognise their sounds. How they open doors or run downstairs. The more time you spend with someone the better you recognise their sound, and that is the same with God. You can't fast track learning how to live with God and hear His voice. Nicola also said to look out for confirmation, like from people with words of knowledge, or scripture speaking to you, as God confirms what he says. Lastly, Nicola tells us to expect peace. When something is from God there is peace that passes understanding.

Q - What are your values, priorities and non-negotiables and are they reflected in your weekly rhythm?

Q - What good practices can you put in place to better schedule your time and attention?

Q - Reflecting on what Nicola said about learning to listen to the voice of God, do you need to reposition yourself or remove a distraction so that you can better hear what He is saying?

Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2

Q - Mary asked Nicola how she navigates the distraction of social media in her life.

Nicola said firstly that she loves technology, but we need to ensure that instead of it using us, we need to use it. There are studies that correlate the more time spent on social media increases problems with mental health, physical health, and decreased life satisfaction.

Nicola warns us to be aware that there is a war for your attention and that app developers and social media platforms are fighting over you.

Nicola places limits on screen time for herself and her children. If we desire to hear the voice of God and discern His will in our life, we cannot be continually distracted by our screens.

Nicola also said that there are agendas and narratives that are trying to shape how you should think and what you should believe. She always endeavours to bring biblical truth into conversations. Culture is always changing, but God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Her final thought here was to ensure that you have a community. Online friends can give you a false sense of community and we are called to do life together with people and so to balance your time with friends both in person and online.

Q - Are social media / screens a distraction in your life?

Q - How best can you balance your time with friends both online and in person?

Q - Reflecting on the thought that there is a narrative that tries to influence you, what good practices can you put in place that will aid you in seeking biblical truth first?

In closing Nicola shared a final thought which was be kind to yourself. You may not be where you want to be, but you have come far from where you were. There is a journey and process of growing and to choose not to do this journey alone. Gather godly people around you because iron sharpens iron, and we were made by God to be in relationship with him and others.