

listening prayer

prayerfully responding to the voice of God

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five sessions to deepen your experience of prayer



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session one:

aligning with God's desires in prayer

knowing God's heart by hearing God's words

Listening prayer is listening for the voice of God.

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." (John 10:27 NIV)

Listening Prayer Defined:

Listening prayer is a posture of openness before God with the explicit intent to listen. It is requesting His voice, not a presentation of our requests. It is asking for His words, not speaking our words.

- Set time aside to listen to God. Avoid multitasking it with other activities.
- Set aside needs and other requests. Simply bring one request... "Speak, Lord. Your servant is listening."
- Bring your Bible, blank paper and pen with you. Journal what is being said.
- Remember that conversations are two-sided. God will speak to you.

Considerations:

1. Listening prayer can be engaged both individually and corporately.
2. Listening prayer means preparing to change course, change plans, embrace new plans.
3. To engage listening prayer, you may have to deal with any personal difficulty with stillness, silence, solitude.
4. To make time for listening prayer, we must evaluate "have to's" on our schedule.

The Nature of God's Words

God's words aren't ordinary words. What is unique about God's words? Consider these Verses

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. (John 1:1-2 NIV)

- How many characteristics can you apply to the Word of God based on these two verses?
- _____

"Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink." (Numbers 20:8 NIV)

- Why do you think God asked Moses to speak to the rock?
- _____

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 NIV)

- What did God do to make light? _____

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. (Psalms 119:105 NIV)

- How would you describe the metaphors in this verse and why?
• _____

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" (John 11:43 NIV)

- Why do you believe Jesus had to command, and in a loud voice at that, Lazarus to come out?
• _____

Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." (Acts 3:6 NIV)

- What does Peter "have?" _____
- What do Peter's words do? _____
- Why do you believe Peter's words do this? _____

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! (Acts 4:18-19 NIV)

- What are Peter and John commanded *not* to do? _____
 - Why do you think this was their command? _____
 - Who do Peter and John resolve to *listen* to? _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

We say "talk is cheap" because it needs to be backed up with action before it can be believed. In the Kingdom of God, words are action and speak for themselves. Prayer is words is action is spirit is life is active is change is prayer.

The Essential Nature of the Verbal Speaking Gifts

Scriptures tells us that the Holy Spirit gives believers these speaking and language gifts.

- Words of Knowledge
- Words of Wisdom
 - These are words from the Lord that apply specifically to people, places and things, with vision and insight from God.

- Tongues
- Interpretation

The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." (Genesis 11:6-7 NIV)

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? (Acts 2:4-8 NIV)

- Division of language brings impossibility
- Unification of language brings possibility
- The church needs to be an agent of the unification of language making all things possible for us in the Name of Jesus.

- Prophecy
 - "Speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit"
- Teaching
 - The Spirit is involved in all aspects of teaching.

In your own ministry context, look at the list of gifts above and evaluate how essential they are, or not, to your everyday work of ministry.

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. (John 6:63 ESV)

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12 NIV84)

Through Listening Prayer:

- Receive vision from His perspective.
- Experience burdens rooted in God’s heart.
- Hear new callings and revive old callings.
- Be corrected, steered, encouraged, stopped, or prodded forward.
- Be called into places of risky, exhilarating faith.
- Be used for the establishment of His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Logos vs Rhema

One final point concerning words. The two Greek words logos and rhema, are both translated “word.”

LOGOS = the word **written**.

- Written _____
- Human condition _____
- General _____
- Timeless _____

RHEMA = the word **uttered/spoken**.

- Spoken _____
- Today’s condition _____
- Specific _____
- Timely _____

The Word spoken, and the Word written will not contradict one another. Do we see God’s heart revealed in both the written and spoken word?

The written word and the inspired (rhema) word authenticate one another. God’s desires are therefore revealed both through time in the Written Word (the logos) and through prayerful time pursuing the inspired word (the rhema) of God. As we hear from God, we discern what we are receiving in the community of godly members of the Body of Christ. God has things in mind for you and your congregation... *specific plans that we can know and obey.*