



## Listening Prayer

We spend time in silence and listening primarily to be with God. It is part of a loving relationship to want to be with the one whom you love. In John 15:9, Jesus says, *“Just as the Father loves me, that’s how I love you. Abide in my love.”* In listening prayer, we grow in our “abiding.” Focused on being with Him, we do not make Jesus a commodity or concentrate on the productiveness of our time with Him. He is our intimate companion.

### 1. STILL AND QUIET YOUR SOUL

Quiet your soul from the busyness of the day. Do this through prayer or by reading a portion of Scripture. It can be helpful to have a notebook for recording whatever distractions or concerns come up, committing them to God for a later time.

### 2. RESIST THE ENEMY

As children of God we can stand firm against the enemy. Before you enter into your time of listening prayer ask God to bind the enemy and prevent him from speaking or interfering in any way with your time. A good prayer for this is, “By the authority of almighty God I surround myself with the light of Christ, I cover myself with the blood of Christ, I seal myself with the cross of Christ. All dark and evil spirits must now leave. No influence is allowed to come near to me but that it is first filtered through the light of Jesus Christ, in whose name I pray. Amen.” (taken from *Prayer- Finding the Heart’s True Home* by Richard Foster).

### 3. INVOKE GOD’S PRESENCE

Praise God and thank Him for wanting to fellowship with you and reveal Himself. Ask Him to especially reveal Himself to you during your time of listening.

### 4. ASK GOD TO SEARCH YOUR HEART

Ask God to reveal any sin and discord in your heart. Confess any known sin. Ask God to forgive you for the things that you become aware of. Acknowledge your general need for Him.

### 5. ASK GOD TO SPEAK TO YOU

When Samuel heard the voice of God speaking his name he answered, *“Speak Lord, Your servant is listening.”* 1 Sam 3:9. Use this as a model to tell God that you are listening to His voice and are prepared to receive whatever He says.

### 6. WAIT IN SILENCE Find a comfortable posture. Be still and quiet...

## 7. RECORD THE IMPRESSIONS YOUR RECEIVE FROM GOD

Write down the words, images, phrases, and thoughts that come into your mind as you listen to God. If you can write phrases in first person as He speaks them to you. You may want to write descriptively or draw images that God gives you.

If there is a question or a concern within you, bring it into the space where you are with God. Continue to listen, **receive**, and **not direct**.

If you sense distractions, write them on the “distractions” list, but allow that God may also be speaking through those.

As you hear, ask God to confirm what is His voice. It’s OK to say, “Is this you, God?” or “Please help me to know what you want me to know.”

Continue to allow space and stay quieted. God may direct you to another passage of Scripture. There may be words that come into your mind. The Spirit may lead you into recognizing certain **emotions** or thoughts. You may have incomplete or unformulated “sensing” (like the beginning of a new idea), remembrances, or images. Whatever it is, try to record it, although not in a task-oriented way. Let your journaling be part of the way you let God enter the conversation. As you write, allow new thoughts to evolve (but stay attentive to those things that may be truly off-course or in the distractions list). It may be helpful to write in two different places or with two colors of ink, separating what you sense *God* may be saying from *your* thoughts and questions. Again, you can ask, “Lord, is this You?” “Am I hearing my own self-tapes?” “Help me to discern the Spirit’s voice from what is my own.”

### For later...

Helpful discerning questions about listening to God

- Was it clear or an impression? We may have different degrees of confidence in what He has said. We seek Him, and so must stay humble in listening, knowing that we are fallible, but that if God wants to make something known to us, He will.
- Is it consistent with Scripture? Either a specific text or a Biblical principle?
- Is there a barrier to hearing God? Am I willing to hear about a sin, a wound, a “no trespassing” place in my soul or behavior?
- Do I generally know what the “internal witness” of God feels like or sounds like for me? Am I growing in trust and experience of the Spirit’s voice?
- Do I sense an emotional reaction within my soul... either an uplift or a down-pull? A sense of consolation (positive and/or rightness) or a sense of desolation (alone and/or negative)?
- What do other mature believers say about my impression of God’s voice to me?
- Are circumstances a concern in this? Is what I am hearing affected by the situation and specifics of my life at the moment?
- Is my listening experience **set within genuine love of God**? Am I being drawn into an abiding with Him? Is His presence felt, known? Is the fruit of the Spirit present (love, joy, peace, etc.)?