

Listening for Lent



DEEPLY ROOTED
BRANCHING OUT



Over this period of Lent I want to encourage you to join in with the whole church listening for Lent.

Over Lent people give up many things, I want to ask you to give up 5 minutes of your day. The idea is to make space for 5 minutes every day to simply listen to what God is saying to you and to our church.

You may find it helpful to get a journal.

Write down every day what you feel God might be saying, whether that be a word, a picture, a bible verse. If you don't hear anything record that, too.

If you stop and listen for 5 minutes every day over Lent, then you will have spent nearly 4 hrs simply listening to what God has to say.

With the whole church doing this, by Easter we will have spent about 270 hrs listening to what God is saying to us as a church. At the front of church there will be a sealed box. You are invited to write down and add to the box what you feel God is saying. After Easter we will open the box and see what has been heard from us corporately listening to God.

The way we do church as Baptists is that we believe in seeking the mind of Christ as a corporate body of believers. This is at the core of church membership taking responsibility to seek God on behalf of the whole church.

May we be blessed as we push into his presence, drawing close to hear the still small voice of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Pete

2015

Jesus said in John 10:27, “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

Learning to listen to God is one of the most important things we can do as Christians but most of us find it the hardest and most strange idea.

Learning to hear the Lord’s voice isn’t complicated. But it does require some discipline to find a quiet place and to allow some time just listening. Perhaps the hardest part is clearing your mind. With all the noise of life regularly cascading through your mind, it can be hard to hear God’s voice. There’s no formula, but let share a few principles that might work:

People learn in different ways. People listen in different ways.

1. If you learn well from pictures, photos and visuals you are a visual learner. You may well be receiving revelation in your human spirit as visual messages: pictures, scenes, dramas, dreams and visions.
2. If you like the spoken word; if you learn well through your ear; then you may be an audio learner. It is likely that you would receive revelation in the spirit by way of listening, that is a word spoken. This means you get a message in words not that you are 'hearing voices.' We are talking about receptivity to the still small voice of God. It is the Spirit telling you the message in words.
3. Perhaps, you receive through feelings, a 'gut feeling', if you will, a motivation toward or away from something, a "sense" that something is wrong. You may learn hands on. You may express yourself in dance or with your hands. You might be considered a kinaesthetic learner. The Spirit moves you by moving upon your feelings and in the motion of your body. You may have trouble, at first, putting in to words what you are sensing.
4. Then there are ideas. All you need to do is to catch hold of the ideas you get. If they arrive spontaneously they may be from God. Be open to the fact that something that suddenly occurs to you may be of God. Something you suddenly remember may be of God.

5. Scripture can be 'brought to our remembrance.' Reminding us of scripture is the role of the Holy Spirit. When scripture verses suddenly 'come to mind' it may be of God. There may also be some confidence (assurance) in your heart that this is of God. This, too, is listening prayer.

So there is no one way to listen and hear from God. That is because there are many ways to receive revelation from God. Our role is to be humble and ready to receive from God.

The best way to start listening is to start by asking a question. Even if that is just, "What do you want to say today, Lord?" Here are some questions that might prove a good starting point.

How do you see me Lord?
What needs to change in my life?
What do you want to say to YBC?
How can I best serve you?
Am I serving in the right place?
Where do I lack courage?

You might like to take the theme that changes every 4 days in the reading notes as the basis of your questions.

These are some suggestions but ask God the questions on your heart.

A prayer to start a time of listening

Father God in stillness I come before you,
Help me put aside distractions
having ears that are open to your voice.
Speak Holy Spirit and reveal your wisdom, truth and love.
Lord Jesus let me hear your heart
for my life, my family and my church Amen

So how do I do this?

There's no formula, but let me share a few principles

1. When you are ready, quiet yourself. If stray thoughts come through your mind, write them down on a separate piece of paper.
2. Read some scripture if you are following the reading plan. Ask the Lord to speak to you through it in a way that you can understand. Ask God to protect you in Jesus' name from deception.
3. Then write down your question for prayer.
4. Pray a simple prayer like the one provided. Pause. This is where you wait and listen. God may direct you to another passage of Scripture. He may share a tender word. Whatever you feel he may be saying to you, write it down.
5. Ask him to confirm anything he shared with you.

Some Simple Strategies

1. Use a journal; it will help you focus. Plus it's a great resource to look back and see the journey the Lord took you on. It also helps fine-tune your spiritual ears to better hear him. Writing down your impression of the Lord's responses creates in you an expectancy that he will respond.
2. Use two different pens. Use the first colour to record your own thoughts and the second pen to record what you sense God is saying. The different colours clarify "who's talking."
3. If, when you sit down to pray, you often have a to-do list pop up in your head, then have another piece of paper handy to make a list with any other thoughts that pop up. It's okay and it's natural. Just let them come out so you can focus.

If useful each day there is a bible reading to help focus your listening.

18th February	Listening	1 Samuel 3:10
19th		John 10:27
20th		Psalms 81:11
21st		James 1:22-24
22nd	Wait	Psalm 40:1-3
23rd		Psalm 37:7
24th		Isaiah 30:18
25th		Ecclesiastes 11:4
26th	Idolatry	Psalm 31:1-8
27th		Habakkuk 2:18-20
28th		Isaiah 40:18-31
1st March		Acts 17:16-34
2nd	Roots	Ephesians 3:14-21
3rd		Colossians 2:6-19
4th		Isaiah 5:1-7
5th		Matthew 13:1-9,18-23
6th	Perseverance	Romans 5:1-11
7th		Philippians 3:1-14
8th		1 Timothy 6:11-16
9th		2 Timothy 2:1-13
10th	Courage	Joshua 1:1-9
11th		Psalm 27:1-14
13th		Act 22:30-23:11
14th		1 Thessalonians 2:1-16

15th	Yes	Luke 8:19-21
16th		Mark 8:27-30
17th		Mark 12:41-44
18th		Mark 14:32-42
19th	Transformed	1 Corinthians 15:50-58
20th		Act 22:6-15
21st		Luke 15:11-32
22nd		Matthew 21:28-32
23rd	Thirst	Psalms 42
24th		Isaiah 55
25th		John 6:22-40
26th		Revelation 7:9-17
27th	Zeal	Psalms 119:129-144
28th		Isaiah 9:1-7
29th		Romans 10:1-17
30th		Romans 12:1-21
31st	Home	John 14:15
1st April		Revelation 21:1-8
2nd		Psalms 90
3rd	Peace	1 Peter 3:8-11
4th	Love	1 John 4:7-21
5th	Next	Matthew 28:16-20



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