

LISTENING WELL

(taken from conversations with Nancy Lindgren and Beth Loecken)

There are several verses in the Bible that refer to listening. Here are just a few.

"Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:12-13

"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." James 1:19

"Therefore, consider carefully how you listen." Luke 8:18a

"To answer before listening - that is folly and shame." Proverbs 18:13

How do we listen in our own walk with the Lord?

Our mentoring flows out of our time with Jesus. How do we have spiritual ears to hear?

1. Make time with God your first priority. Let God speak to you personally and intimately through His Word.
2. Find a place of quiet without distractions. It may mean turning quiet worship music on or starting with praise and thanksgiving to get the clutter out of your mind.
3. Confess sin. *"But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear."* Isaiah 59:2
4. Ask specific questions in your prayers. It is easier to see and hear God's response to our prayer requests.
5. Watch for the answers. Don't just think it's a coincidence.
6. Fasting. *"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him, but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit."* 1 Cor 2:9-10
7. Stay connected to the vine. John 15:4-7 Stay in tune with the Holy Spirit. Consistency will bring about better hearing. Often, God will continue to confirm what He has initially spoken.
8. Journal. This helps us to stay focused and not let our minds wander.

Listening to our Mentees

(some of this comes from blog posts by Michael Hyatt)

1. Listen more than you talk.
2. Be fully present. No distractions, look her in the eyes.
3. Listen with your heart.
4. Listen to remember to follow up.
5. Ask good questions. Especially ones that start with why. Continue to peel back the onion going deeper with each layer. Follow up your first question with a second. Can you elaborate on that? How did that make you feel?
6. Enter into her world. Put yourself in her shoes. Have empathy. Feel what she is feeling. Validate her feelings.
7. Don't be a fixer. Don't try to solve problems she shares. She's often not looking for an answer. She wants to process with someone. She wants to be heard.
8. Repeat back to her what she has shared to make sure you have heard it correctly.
9. Write it down and take notes if you need to. It helps to remember.

What to do with a mentee who doesn't want to talk or share openly?

1. Continue to ask good questions. Draw her thoughts and feelings out.
2. Continue to love and affirm her.
3. Give her space.
4. Give her time.
5. Pray for her and with her.
6. Create a safe place for her to share. Does she trust you with her deepest thoughts and feelings?
7. Your time together might be shorter. Continue on. It might take longer than expected.
8. Ask her how you can best come alongside her.
9. Don't give up on her.
10. Face the reality that you may not be a good fit for each other. That's OK.