

Listening Prayer

“He is there and He is not silent”

- [Click here](#) for cartoon

Wisdom of Pooh

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Why do we need to listen?

1. Hearing / listening prayer
 1. Deepens our relationship with Father God
 2. Walking with Jesus becomes an adventure with Jesus
 3. Makes faith fun

Biblical overview (1)

1. Genesis 1:2 “And God said, let there be light”
 1. God speaks
 2. The supernatural occurs (even if you can’t see it)!
2. Genesis 12: 1 The Lord had said to Abram “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to a country that I will show you.”
 1. So Abram left Haran
 2. Aged 75 and set out for Canaan

Biblical overview (2)

1. Exodus 3:4 Moses goes to the burning bush and hears the voice of God, “Moses, Moses”
 1. Moses says ‘Here I am.’
 2. He is told to take off his sandals for the place where you are standing is holy ground.
2. Do understand when you hear/see the voice of God you are on holy ground?

Biblical overview (3)

1. 1 Sam 9:3 Saul goes to consult a seer
 1. Text tells us that a prophet used to be called a seer.
 1. Note: we often 'see' the word of God than 'hear it'
 2. Samuel anoints Saul as leader over Israel.
2. 1 Sam 16:12 Samuel meets David, "Then the Lord said, 'Rise and anoint him; he is the one'"
 1. Sees David, has an assurance that he is the one and acts on it
 2. "And from that day the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power"
v.13

And more besides

- The major & minor prophets e.g. Isaiah, Amos
- Three instances of God's audible voice in the Gospels
- Peter hears the Lord in Acts
- Philip hears an angel in Acts
- Saul / Paul hears the Lord in Acts
- John hears the Lord in Revelation

Question to myself

1. If the Bible is so full of God speaking to his people, why is it that 21st Century Christianity is so full of...
 1. People discussing God?
 2. People singing about God?
 3. People asking, requesting, interceding, petitioning God?
 4. And so little listening to Father God?

[Open prayer story]

Case study: Jeremiah

1. The Lord says to Jeremiah that before he was born he was called to be a prophet to the nations. 1:5
2. The word of the Lord came to me: “What do you see, Jeremiah?” 1:11a
3. “A branch of an almond tree,” I replied 1:11b
4. The Lord said to me, “You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled”
5. Footnote in my NIV: ‘The Hebrew for *watching* sounds like the Hebrew for *almond tree*.’

Strategy 1

1. Adopt a Biblical mindset – “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it” [Ps.24:1] so do not limit God to a quiet time or church attendance.
2. Do not adhere to Greek thinking which creates a sacred / secular divide. If we do we always limit God to a box.
3. Ask Father to accompany you through the day.
4. Ask His advice regarding everyday decisions.
5. Some books speak of ‘a revelatory state of mind’. I call it ‘God awareness’ and believe it to be part of the normal Christian life.

1. What's the story?



Strategy 2

- Know that 'Wisdom cries in the market place' [Pr.1:20]
- Jesus in his earthly ministry spent more time talking and teaching in the streets, around the lake and on the mountainside than in the synagogues. He still does!
- Remember, you are justified and sanctified. Your imagination is capable of good and bad.
- And be Jesus in those places.

Strategy 3

- 1 Kg. 19:12 Elijah did not hear God in the gale, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire.
- Listen for the gentle whisper found in the mundane not the spectacular e.g. a donkey, a bowl of fruit,
- Do small things for the glory of God and you will hear His pleasure.

[As You Like It story]

Strategy 4

- Know that beauty can be found under a badger skin.
- This was the title of a Bob Mumford sermon which I've never forgotten.
- The Ark of the Covenant was covered by skins for transportation. The KJV calls them badger skins but that is disputed. The NIV refers to sea cows. Ex 26:14, Ex 36:19, Ex. 39:34
- The exact identity doesn't matter. The principle does. God's glory can be found under a smelly animal pelt!

Three cautions

1. We are not talking New Age, fortune telling, astrology, mindforce, meditation (transcendental or otherwise), Krishna consciousness, Buddhism, occult or paranormal.
2. The Bible is holy, sacrosanct and complete. Any 'received word' from the Lord is always subject to Scripture.
3. 1 Cor. 13:12 tells us that "now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror ... Now I know in part ..." Do not over-rate what you think you hear but do give it respect!

Three checks

1. Does it comply with Scripture?
2. Does it edify the church and believers?
3. Does it sound like the character of our loving heavenly Father?

Three blessings

1. Hearing / listening prayer
 1. Deepens our relationship with Father God
 2. Walking with Jesus becomes an adventure with Jesus
 3. Makes faith fun [clematis story]

Acts 2:17-18

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
Your young men will see visions,
Your old men will dream dreams.
Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days
And they will prophesy.

Lifegroup discussion 1

- What would it be like to be an employer whose employee never listened to a word you had said?
- What would it be like to be married to a spouse who just talked and never listened to you.?
- What would it be like to be a teacher whose children never listened to a word she said?
- What would it be like for the Lord God whose church never listened to the one they worshipped?

Lifegroup discussion 2

- Consider some Old Testament prophets e.g. Isaiah. What visions and words did they have? E.g. Isaiah 6
- In what ways was Jesus a prophet. Remember a prophet forth tells the Word of the Lord not foretells the future!
- How strong is the prophetic theme in Acts?
- Consider a tray of regular household items and use them as a basis for hearing God. Don't forget to pray first!
- Close your eyes and ask the Lord to focus your sanctified imagination to hear his voice. What do you see? What does he say?
- If you were God, what would you say to the world today? Remember to use the 3 prong check – does it comply with scripture? Does it edify the saints? Does it sound like Father?