

# Listening Prayer Exercise – Group Setting

1. Have Bibles, paper, pens available. Open with Devotion (see page 2 for a suggested devotional)
2. If in a group setting, pray in groups of two to four (i.e. pray out loud with and for one another: for our individual needs, our church, the larger body of Christ, our city/country/world) ~ 5-10 minutes.
  - a. We encourage going straight to prayer and not discussing our celebrations & concerns so more time is spent in actual prayer.
  - b. As we hear the praises & prayers being lifted up in the group, we may feel the Spirit's prompting to pray for someone else's situation before we lift up our own celebrations & concerns.
3. Introduce Listening Prayer exercise
  - a. Mary Geegh was a missionary in India for 38 years and discovered the power of listening prayer by a visiting pastor, Dr. L.R. Scudder, Sr (circa 1925). His testimony of "Let us be still – and wait on the Lord. He has the answer for everything" changed Mary Geegh's ministry and invoked the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of all she met thereafter. She recaps many of her encounters in her booklet, *God Guides*.
  - b. The process is simple: **Take our concerns to God; be still, listen; obey**
4. **What is our question(s) of God?** Determine what question is on your mind. Some examples include:
  - i. I don't know what to do. What should I/we do about \_\_\_\_\_?
  - ii. What does God want me to do with this opportunity/situation?
  - iii. What am I missing that I should know? What do you want to say to me, Lord?
  - iv. If this is for a ministry or leadership team, asking the same question is helpful: Lord, where do You want this ministry to focus? What do we need to know? Some team members may feel strongly about asking a different/additional question. That's ok. The point is that we're agreeing to yield to Christ to lead and guide us.
5. **Prayer before Listening begins** (Read verses if not already familiar with them. We are claiming our scriptural authority for seeking God's guidance.)

*Father, we come to You in the name of Jesus and according to James 1:5 we are seeking wisdom for the question(s) we have. In the name of Jesus, may only Your voice be heard. May ours, others or the enemy's be muted and even our own thoughts taken captive to the obedience of Christ according to 2 Cor 10:5. We ask that only Your Holy Spirit will speak as we wait on You for wisdom, insight, and direction; and what You have to show us and direct us to do, we will quickly obey. Amen.\**
6. **Listening Prayer:** Explain how much time will be set aside for listening (at least 10-20 min)
  - a. For those new to experience, explain how listening can vary. With a question in mind, individuals will find a place to sit and listen for a word, verse(s), image, vision, song, phrase, etc. Some may do this for the full 10-20 minutes. Some may do this for 5 minutes or some may prefer to go straight to Scripture. Some participants write down additional questions as they go along.
  - b. If sitting quietly, nothing but silence may come. That is ok. If your mind wanders to worldly cares, note your thoughts on paper. Some may enjoy centering themselves by writing down the Lord's Prayer, a favorite hymn or journaling thoughts/feelings.
  - c. Many experience God's guidance through Scripture by randomly opening a hardcopy or digital Bible and reading His word. In fact, some smart phone users utilize a random Bible verse generator to decide where to focus their reading. After opening the Bible, read a page or two in either direction trusting God to raise up a verse(s) to speak to your question and/or situation. **Write these verses down.** Repeat this process of randomly opening to another section of Scripture several times. Keep in mind that seemingly random thoughts or verses can become clear as part of the group's overall message -- so write things down rather than rely on your own understanding.
7. **How did God speak?** (After 10-20 minutes of listening, reconvene as a group to share)
  - a. If seeking God's guidance as a ministry/leadership team, take notes regarding what each person heard.
  - b. What are the overlapping themes or messages? Sharing is completely voluntary. If however, this is a ministry or planning committee, sharing and capturing what each participant heard is valuable. God's overall message can be heard through the body of Christ – often bringing clarity sooner versus later.
8. Close in prayer, resolving to obey what the Lord revealed. **Obeying is the most important part of listening!** If in a group setting (i.e. retreat): consider closing with worship, communion, and break fast together if fasting. In ministry settings, once the meeting is over, promptly share a recap of questions/answers with participants in case there are corrections to make; then when accurate, disseminate a final copy as appropriate.

\*(Adapted by Cathy White from *God Guides* by Mary Geegh, 2000, 14<sup>th</sup> printing)

## *Opening Devotional*

### *In preparation for Listening Prayer*

In preparation for this special time with God, it is strongly urged that we examine our hearts, and detect any unconfessed sin. Scripture records that God requires His people to repent of their sins before He will hear their prayers. King David said:

*Come and hear, all of you who reverence the Lord, and I will tell you what He did for me: For I cried to Him for help, with praises ready on my tongue. He would not have listened if I had not confessed my sins. But He listened! He heard my prayer! He paid attention to it! Blessed be God who didn't turn away when I was praying, and didn't refuse me His kindness and love. (Psalm 66:16-20)*

Let's Begin by a time of silent meditation to examine our Hearts (~1-2 min) [Pause after each of these to allow a time of reflection]

Gracious Lord, help us to detect our Unconfessed Sins

Our obvious sins

Our less obvious sins

The Sins of Omission (our inaction)

The Sins of Commission (our actions)

Sins that have caused us to leave You, Oh Lord –

Our worldly mindedness,

Our self-centeredness,

Our spiritual indifference,

Our unwillingness to share our faith in Jesus Christ with others,

Our unwillingness to make sufficient time in Your Word,

Our unwillingness to make sufficient time in prayer,

Our poor relationships - with family, friends, pastor(s); other members of the church community and those in the world.

[Pause]

Lord we confess and repent of our sins and receive Your gracious forgiveness. Thanks be to God. Amen.

(Devotional adapted by Gloria Stevens from Dr. Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ  
[www.nairobichapel.org/NC/Bulletin/HowToPrepareYourselfSpiritually.pdf](http://www.nairobichapel.org/NC/Bulletin/HowToPrepareYourselfSpiritually.pdf))

**For assistance or more info regarding listening prayer, contact [4610psbestill@gmail.com](mailto:4610psbestill@gmail.com).**

**Join us for group sessions of Listening Prayer at Bethany UMC! For info visit [bethany-umc.org/prayer](http://bethany-umc.org/prayer)**

Bethany UMC members willing to share their experiences and/or help with listening prayer:

Anita Bradberry, Jeanne O'Dell, Tracy Johnson, Ellen Mainiero, Fiona McNally, Chris White, Cathy White