

Listening Prayer Exercise - Individual

1. Open with Devotion (see page 2 for a suggested devotional)
2. The process is simple: **Take our concerns to God; be still, listen; obey.**

What is our question(s) of God? 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. Should I contribute to this effort?
- iv. What am I missing that I should know? What do you want to say to me, Lord?

3. **Prayer before Listening begins** (read verses if not already familiar with them)

*Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus and according to James 1:5 I am seeking wisdom for the question(s) I have. In the name of Jesus, may only your voice be heard. May mine, others or the enemy's be muted and even my own thoughts taken captive to the obedience of Christ according to 2 Cor 10:5. I ask that only your Holy Spirit will speak as I wait on you for wisdom, insight, and direction and what you have to show me and direct me to do I will quickly obey. Amen.**

4. **Listening Prayer:**

- a. Listening can vary because God will speak to us in ways we'll understand. It takes practice to tune in our radio frequency to His station. With a question in mind, find a place to sit and listen for a word, verse(s), image, vision, song, phrase, etc. You may 'be still' for however long you wish (5, 10 or the full 20 min), but some prefer to go straight to Scripture.
- b. If sitting quietly, nothing but silence may come. That is ok. If your mind wanders to worldly cares, note your thoughts on paper. You 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. Some participants write down additional/new questions as they go along. 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.

5. **How did God speak?**

- a. Write down what was heard (scripture, word, phrase, image, song, etc).
- b. What are the overlapping themes or messages?

6. Close in prayer, resolving to obey what the Lord revealed. **Obeying is the most important part of the process!** Though true clarity may take some time in coming. Ultimately, the goal of this process is to seek and rely upon Him, know His peace, and trust in Him as we wait for understanding. Since His thoughts are not our thoughts, no doubt His plans will unfold in a way we hadn't expected!

⁸ "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord.

⁹ "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:8-9(NIV)

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 always 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 me to detect my Unconfessed Sins

My obvious sins

My Less obvious sins

The Sins of Omission (my inaction)

The Sins of Commission (my actions)

Sins that have caused me to leave you, Oh Lord –

My worldly mindedness,

My self-centeredness,

My spiritual indifference,

My unwillingness to share my faith in Jesus Christ with others,

My unwillingness to make sufficient time in Your Word,

My unwillingness to make sufficient time in prayer,

My poor relationships - with my family, my friends, my pastor; other members of my church community and those in the world.

[Pause]

Lord I confess and repent of my 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)

For assistance or more info regarding listening prayer, contact 4610psbestill@gmail.com.

Join us for group sessions of Listening Prayer at Bethany UMC! For info visit 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, Debra Coe, Fiona McNally, Chris White, Cathy White