

Practice Guide for September 21st 2025

The Art of Listening—How to Be a Good Listener

Suggested Ice Breaker (5 minutes)

When was the last time you felt truly listened to with no interruptions, quick fixes, or distracted nods? How did it feel? Follow-up: When was the last time you felt unheard? What was that like?

Opening Lectio (10 minutes)

Begin with a moment of silence to center on God's presence.

Have someone read Psalm 131 slowly while the group listens and reflects:

Lord, I am not proud and haughty. I don't think myself better than others. I don't pretend to know it all. ² I have calmed and quieted myself before the Lord, just as a weaned child resting upon their mother. Yes, my soul is still like this child. ³ O Israel, you too should quietly trust in the Lord—now, and always.

After another moment of silence, ask someone to pray, inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your time.

Reflecting On Scripture (15 minutes)

Have someone read Mark 10:46–52 (the story of Bartimaeus) out loud for the group.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What do you notice about the way Jesus listens to Bartimaeus in this story?
2. How does Jesus' posture of stopping, asking, and waiting contrast with the way people around Bartimaeus responded?
3. How might slowing down to really listen create space for God's healing and presence in our relationships?

Community Practice (25 minutes)

Slowly read aloud the following quote:

"Most people do not dialogue, they perform a monologue in the presence of another person."

—Adam S. McHugh

Take 7-10 minutes to journal your response to these questions:

1. In what kinds of conversations (family, work, church, conflict, etc.) am I most likely to rush, defend, or fix instead of truly listening?
2. What practices (slowing down, asking good questions, being present) could help me make space for another's voice before offering my own?
3. Who in my life needs me to stop, sit, or kneel with them right now?

After journaling, take a few minutes to share with two or three others.

Have someone read this quote together out loud before moving to group discussion:

“Many people are looking for an ear that will listen. They do not find it among Christians, because these Christians are talking when they should be listening.” —Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Group Discussion:

- What makes it difficult for you to stop and listen instead of rushing or defending?
- What’s one relationship where God might be inviting you to listen more deeply?
- How could our community group embody a culture of listening that reflects Jesus?

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Close your time by praying this prayer based on the Rule of St. Benedict out loud together as a group:

*Grant me, O Lord, a heart that listens,
not with arrogance but with love.
Teach me to attend with the ear of my heart
to the words of my brothers and sisters,
that in listening to them,
I may also hear You,
for You speak through the least and the lowly.
Amen*

Further Reading:

- *The Listening Life* by Adam S. McHugh
- *The Lost Art of Listening* by Michael P. Nichols