

g. "You aren't one of his disciples too, are you?" -John 18: 25

**Validate your understanding**

Also referred as reflective listening, it is to state the feelings and the content of the speaker, and then asking the speaker if you are getting him correctly.

Some of the things that you can do to validate what your understanding is to paraphrase, to describe a person's emotional state and to summarize his words with an inquiry at the end to

**h. Determine your limits**

You cannot listen forever. Listening if done properly is an absorbing task and depending on the attention that is required, can drain your energy. You have to signal if you cannot listen any further and ask that maybe you can continue on another time. Some folks also are emotional talker. They are not simply trying to communicate a specific need to you but are trying to fill a need through you. Such persons talk incessantly and lengthily, in circle and jump from one topic to another.

## Grow your Life Practice

Ask yourself, "Am I a good listener?" Am I trying to go deeper than the words that I hear and probe into the feelings of the person that is speaking to me?" Do people love to open up to me? Or they are turned off talking with me?"

Think of three person in your life that you need to listen to you more and make a resolution to give them your time and attention the next time they will talk to you.

## Grow your Love to God

Ask God to make you more apt to listen than to talk and to open your heart to the people talking and not only your ears to what they are trying to say to you.

# LISTENING EFFECTIVELY

## Community Series #2

**Session Objective:** For the members to learn how to effectively listen.

## Grow your Fellowship

Members share their significant experiences from the past week, and their progress in living out their life resolutions.

## Grow your Understanding

One author said that in our waking hours, we communicate more than any other activity. And in communication, a bigger chunk is spent in listening. But that same author states the sad fact that only a few people know how to listen. On this module we will study the "hows" of listening

### 1. How do you properly listen?

- a. *She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.* - Luke 10:39

**Be physically ready**

Sitting at a master's feet just like what Mary did is a posture of a student who is ready to learn and listen. Listening takes preparation and our posture and body languages signals whether we are ready or not. The best posture, though it may not be possible all the time, is seating at the edge of your seat, slightly leaning towards the speaker, hands uncrossed( crossing of hands that signals doubt or suspiciousness), and an eye to eye contact.

The listening posture should never be faked. Never pose to listen when you do not really intend to listen. But it can further help you focus if you intend to listen, and also encourages the

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If what we are to listen is personal, sensitive or would need extra time to attend to, we need to be physically at rest. Ask for some time to be prepared, and as much as possible isolate yourselves from any distracting noise or any one that can hear you.

- b. *“Pay attention, Job, and listen to me; be silent, and I will speak.  
- Job 33:31*

**By giving full attention**

Attention is more than just having the right posture. It primarily pertains to the readiness of our minds to listen. Many try to listen but are totally unable to drop the concerns that fill their minds. Examples are when you try to listen to your child without closing the book that you are reading or without taking away our eyes from the computer. Many husbands readily say “yes’ to what their wives only to forget it all together, and could not even remember saying yes.

The next time that a person comes to you and wants to tell you something, be sure that you are dropping all your concerns and focus all your attention to him. This is especially beneficial for the family who seem not to run out of a member complaining that someone is not listening.

Part of attending to the person talking is observing his paraverbal and his non-verbal communication. Paraverbal refers to the voice quality and volume of the speaker and the nonverbal refers to the other elements like body language. Often times they would hint us about the emotions and other psychological elements important in grasping the message.

*We cannot let another person into our hearts or minds unless we empty ourselves. We can truly listen to him or truly hear her only out of emptiness.* —M. Scott Peck, American Psychologist

- c. *As a fair exchange, I speak as to my children, open wide your hearts also.*  
-2 Corinthians 6:13

**By emptying yourself of any preconceived meaning**

Closely related to giving full attention is preventing ourselves to prematurely interpret what the person means, or to have any

bias or preconceptions as to what is the person is up to or what he wants. If we do not empty ourselves, either we miss the message or end up putting our own meaning in the other person’s words. Emptying oneself includes suspending any preconceived notions about what is being said and about the one talking, and to relieve yourself of any negative emotion that might impede in your attempt to understand the other person.

- d. *“Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves **know** how it **feels** to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt.  
- Exodus 23:9*

**Empathize**

Empathic listening is putting yourself in the psychological position of the person talking. This enable us to understand not only what the person is saying but also the what the other person is feeling and going through enabling the listener to properly understand the words in their proper context.

Make the person know that you understand what he feels. This affirms a speaker’s personhood and starts a healing process. One caution though. Empathy does not mean that you have to experience the emotions of the speaker as well. Being infected with a speaker’s anger or his depression and fear will never empower you as a listener. It will only make you part of it.

- e. *“When your people ask you, ‘Won’t you tell us what you mean by this?’  
Ezekiel 37:18*

**Ask questions**

This will enable you to fill the gaps in your understanding about what the person is saying. Follow trailing is the use of questions until you get into the root of what you want to understand and uncover. See it though that you are not being too probing on things that the person is not intending to reveal.

- f. **Summarize**

One of the essential skills in listening is summarizing. It is the ability to distill what is being said. Many speakers do not know how to say briefly what they want to say and instead just unload a heap full of words. In fact many do not even know what they really want to say. The ability to summarize not only help you as a listener but also helps the speaker as well.