



CONNECT, LISTENING AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Catherine Pryor Miller

"Listen and attend with
the ear of your heart."

St. Benedict of Nursia

Think about someone in your life who's a good listener.

What's an adjective you would use to describe him/her?

How about a feeling towards this person?

"All guests who
present
themselves are to
be welcomed as
Christ."

St. Benedict of Nursia





Visitor - Definition

"A visitor is someone who comes and goes without much preparation on our part or much thought afterward."

Guest - Definition

"A guest, in comparison, is typically a person who is cared for and has been intentionally invited. Most of the time, a guest is somebody who is an active participant...a person who is looking for a specific experience."



HOLY

definition

**set apart, consecrated to God or to a
religious purpose.**

Questions people ask when looking for a new church home.

- 1) Does anyone want to know me?
- 2) Does this congregation care about each other? This gages how healthy your church is.
- 3) Am I needed?
- 4) Is there a place for me relationally?

HOLY LISTENING IN CHURCHES

"When we engage in it, we are hoping and expecting to encounter God. Holy listening is indispensable in congregations because it builds intimacy and helps people connect with each other in a way that goes beyond the superficial, resulting in powerful bonds between people. "

- Craig Satterlee



HUNGERING FOR
SPIRITUAL DEPTH AND
THE LONGING TO BE
LISTENED TO...



"A hunger for spiritual depth and integrity is apparent both within and beyond traditional faith communities. Why?"

Marjorie Thompson
Soul Feast

TECHNOLOGY

How we communicate has changed. Many people long for stability amid such rapid change.

SUPERFICIALITY

‘If you are going to live your life with Christ, one of the great challenges is to forget yourself’, and to really turn outwards and concern yourself with other people. We live in a culture that focuses on me.

- Fr. Timothy Radcliffe OP

Examples of "me" churches.





ANXIETY

We're paralyzed by fear. These fears contribute to a pervasive anxiety and a desire for a secure faith. Stress is a precursor to anxiety, and over 40 million Americans are afflicted with some type of anxiety disorder today.

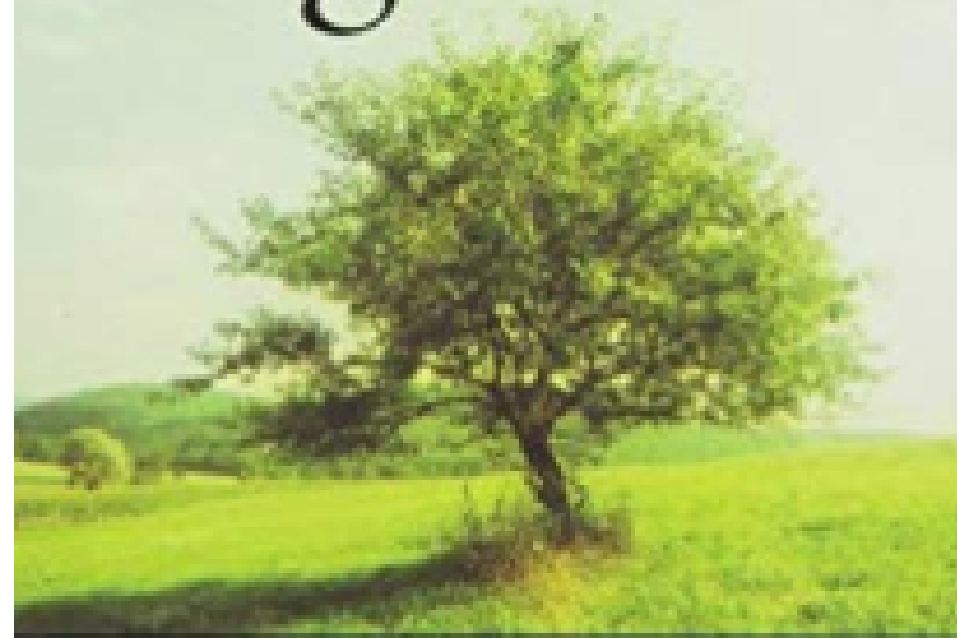
NATURAL DESIRE TO CONNECT TO GOD

"You have made us for yourself, oh Lord. Our hearts are restless until they rest in you". | St. Augustine (Complicated by 1-3)

"The first service
that we owe
others in the
fellowship of
caring consists
of listening to
them."

It would be impossible to overrate Dietrich Bonhoeffer's importance as a disciple,
a great Christian, and moral leader."—*The New York Times Book Review*

Life Together



The Classic Exploration of Christian Community

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

"Often the most fruitful ministries are in church basements. This is where we're listened to."

Nadia Bolz Weber





HOLY LISTENING QUALITIES

- Self emptying
- Conscious effort
- Understanding mind and body information
- Silencing a need to respond



SKILLS NEEDED FOR HOLY LISTENING

1) Focusing your Attention

- set aside distractions
- prevent interruptions
- allow for silences

2) Listening Generously

- follow what is said and note what is not said
 - * feelings beneath words
 - * Meta messages
 - * embrace the mystery of the conversation.

A person wearing a hat and jacket is seen from behind, looking up at sunlight filtering through trees. The scene is bright and atmospheric, with rays of light creating a sense of hope and clarity.

SKILLS NEEDED FOR HOLY LISTENING (CONT)

3) Being fully present

- Convey interest with

* eye contact

* body language

* encouraging words

4) Responding verbally

Summarize content (RASAA)

- receive

- appreciate

- summarize

- ask question (clarify)

- avoid probing advising,

evaluating and interpreting.

AVOID AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

Although well intentioned, they reflect your own autobiography, frame of reference, and value system...we become controlling and directing when we do this.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY AND LISTENING

Clear Purpose - To grow healthy spiritual lives by building a healthy small group community.

Safe Environment - To create a safe environment where people can be heard and feel loved. (No quick answers, snap judgements or simple fixes.)

Be Confidential - To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY AND LISTENING

Conflict Resolution - To avoid group gossip and to immediately resolve any concerns following the principles of Matthew 18: 15-17.

Spiritual Health - To give group members permission to speak into my life and help me live a healthy balanced life that is pleasing to God.

Building Relationships - To get to know the other members of the group and pray for them regularly.

Soularium Cards

A dialogue in pictures

www.soularium.com



Sharing Faith Cards

www.sharingfaithdinners.com

Spiritual Questions



When have you used your knowledge and skills to benefit others for the glory of God?

¿Cuándo ha utilizado su conocimiento y habilidades para beneficiar a otros para la gloria del Señor?



Share an experience that taught you something about the power of Jesus.

Comparta una experiencia que le haya enseñado algo acerca del poder de Jesús.



Share an experience when your faith sustained you in a particularly difficult time or when your faith enabled you to help another person going through a difficult time.

Comparta una experiencia de cuando su fe lo sostuvo en un momento particularmente difícil o cuando su fe le permitió ayudar a otra persona que atravesaba un momento difícil.



Jesus often told his followers to “take up their cross.” Share a story about a time when your faith in Christ prompted you to do something that was difficult.

A menudo, Jesús le dijo a sus seguidores que “tomen su cruz.” Comparta una historia acerca de un momento cuando su fe en Cristo lo movió a hacer algo que fue difícil.

Community of Hope International

www.communityofhopeinternational.org

"A School for God's Service"

Vision: To be a listening presence

Mission: Creating communities steeped in Benedictine spirituality, to serve others through compassionate listening.

SELECTIVE LISTENING EXERCISE

Selective listening is the act of hearing and interpreting only parts of a message that seem relevant to you, while ignoring or devaluing the rest. Often, selective listeners will form arguments before they've heard the full story, making them not only poor listeners, but poor speakers too!

**DO YOU
REALLY
LISTEN?**