

THE SERVANT'S DANCE III

THE GIFT OF LISTENING

¹⁰ Then Yahweh came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for Your slave is listening."

I Samuel 3:10 (LSB)

¹⁹ Post this at all the intersections, dear friends: Lead with your ears, follow up with your tongue, and let anger straggle along in the rear.

James 1:19 (MSG)

¹³ Listen before you answer. If you don't, you are being stupid and insulting.

Proverbs 18:13 (GNT)

“God gives us one mouth that we can close
and two ears that we can't close.”

- I. Hearing and listening aren't synonymous.
 - A. There is as much difference in hearing and listening as hot versus cold, day versus night, passive versus active.
 - B. Hearing is basically to gain content or information for one's own purposes.
 - C. Listening is caring for, and being empathetic toward, the person who is speaking.

D. Hearing means that you are concerned about what is going on inside of you during the conversation.

E. Listening means you are trying to understand the feelings of the other, and you are listening for their sake.

II. When we give the gift of listening...

A. We are not thinking about what we're going to say when the other stops talking.

B. We are being completely accepting of what is being said, and how, without judgment.

C. Empathetic acceptance doesn't mean that you agree with the content, simply that you understand what is being communicated.

D. Listeners can mirror back what is being said, because they listen with both eyes and ears.

III. The ministry of listening

A. Listen more.

“Be quick to hear.” (James 1:19a)

* Wisdom begins when we listen more and talk less.

B. Talk less.

“Be slow to speak.” (James 1:19b)

²⁰ Do you see a [conceited] man who speaks quickly [offering his opinions or answering without thinking]? There is more hope for a [thickheaded] fool than for him.

Proverbs 29:20

* Think before you speak.

C. Calm down.

“Be slow to anger.” (James 1:19c)

* Quick speaking leads to quick anger. The angrier we get the faster we speak, and the less we listen.

IV. Qualities of a listening servant

A. Not overbearing (Titus 1:7)

B. Not quarrelsome (I Timothy 3:3)

C. Not quick tempered (Titus 1:7)

D. Not violent (I Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)

E. Gentle (1 Timothy 3:3)

V. The fruits of listening

A. People feel safe.

B. People feel seen.

C. People feel appreciated.

D. People will internalize a desire to listen.

E. Words only account for 7% of the overall message that we hear. Tone of voice accounts for 38%, and body language for 55% of the message. Listening is a developed skill. As we mature as servants, cultivating the gift of listening is one of the greatest gifts that we can offer our loved ones and our world.