

A vibrant, sun-dappled forest scene featuring a clear stream with small rapids and fallen logs. The water is a deep blue-green, reflecting the surrounding dense foliage. The trees are tall and thin, with a thick canopy of bright green leaves. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Listening Prayer

Elizabeth Zacharias

Listening Prayer



Prayer is the art of talking with God. People often describe prayer as a simple conversation with God where you tell Him about your problems, ask Him to help you and other people, as well as acknowledging who He is in praise and thanksgiving.

Have you ever thought that He may want us to let Him speak to us in answer to our prayers? We know that He often speaks to us through other people, through our circumstances and through the scriptures.

But have you ever considered that God may want to respond to us through the Holy Spirit inspired thoughts or pictures in our own mind?

For some people, this may sound like an odd thing. They may ask how would God speak to me through my thoughts?

Mother Theresa said, "Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depths of our hearts."

So how do I know if I really hear from God. Graham Cooke, a modern-day prophet and prayer expert said, "the voice of the Lord is like a whisper at times. That is why being still is important to prophecy. In the peace of God, revelation flows."

Listening Prayer



So first of all, we need to give God the opportunity to speak to us. Being still or quieting ourselves so we can hear the voice of God gives us the space to hear His voice. Elijah (in 1 Kings 19:11-13) was told to wait and hear God's voice after Elijah's showdown with the prophets of Baal where God showed Himself mighty on Elijah's behalf.

Queen Jezebel had heard of what had happened and ran after Elijah. Elijah, now terrified, he ran and hid in a cave. God told Him to wait and listen for His voice. Elijah first saw the wind of God but did not hear His voice there.

Then an earthquake occurred but Elijah heard nothing from God. Then there was a great fire. Each time something happened, Elijah asked if that was the voice of God. Each time, there was no response. It was only after the fire had passed by Elijah that he heard a still, small voice that was God.

Therefore, we need to step aside from the busyness of life to ask God what He wants to say to us. John 10:27 (NKJV) says, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

We need to make time to learn His voice inside of our hearts like Mother Theresa said. Practicing being still by first asking God to speak to us and then remaining quiet for a certain length of time and then writing down the impressions and thought which come to our minds. I call this listening prayer.

Listening Prayer



One thing which I have done over the years is to spend time listening to the Lord. At different times during my walk with the Lord, I have set aside at least fifteen minutes to sit at the Lord's feet and listen for His voice in the stillness.

It hasn't always been easy, but it has definitely been worth it.

Distractions seem to hit me from every side, both in my mind and from my outside environment, to keep me from hearing God's voice.

One practical thing I do during that time is to keep a pad of paper or a journal by my side so that I can jot things down during that time period.

I divide the paper in half so that I can write the distractions or reminders on one side to take care of them later.

On the other side, I write what I think I am hearing from the Lord to pray over later as well, whether it is a picture or scripture reference or a word.

Sometimes it is a person's face or name, so that I can pray for them with perhaps a word from the heart of God for them.

This is a good habit to get into. It helps us to hear easier from the Lord, if we take a short amount of time daily or a couple of times a week to practice hearing His voice. The more we do it, the more likely we will recognize His voice.

Listening Prayer



It often will help our day go more efficiently as well. Plus, it helps us hear His voice better throughout the rest of the day in order to give a word to those around us.

This happened to me just recently. I had to prepare a message to share with my church.

I had the topic but didn't have it planned out until the day before I was to speak.

During the week before the Sunday where I was going to speak, I did this exercise of listening prayer, a few times that week.

I didn't receive any insight about the message when I did the exercises but the day before, I was able to put the draft of the message together.

It all fell into place, following the rough outline and notes that I had prepared.

After I gave the message, the pastor told me that he had thought that particular message was the best message that I had ever given there.

So, I knew that even if I hadn't "heard" anything, I actually had gotten something from the Holy Spirit.

Listening Prayer



So, take some time to try this as an exercise of faith.

Block out 20 or 15 minutes of your time.

Go off to a quiet spot and set a timer for the allotted time.

Start off by first thanking God for His presence and for all He has done.

Have a journal beside you to jot down any things which are highlighted in your mind.

Don't worry if you feel distracted by different things coming at your mind.

It is going to happen. Just shoo them away, like flies, and get back to seeking the Lord.

Remember to thank the Lord for speaking to you at the end of the time.

And if you don't seem to hear anything don't beat yourself up about it.

Sometimes what God is communicating to you is on a different level than what you are conscious of.

Listening Prayer



About the Author



Elizabeth Zacharias lives in the shadow of Kansas City with her husband of over 25 years and her two young adult daughters, and their three cats. They moved from Maine to Missouri via Wyoming over 20 years ago. She has a Bachelors of Science in Social Work from the University of Maine at Orono.

She is passionate about her pursuit of God, prayer, missions and her creative endeavors. She loves exploring the outdoors, foreign cuisines, writing and chocolate. She longs to see others come into an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and also into their own creative potential which she believes God planned for them from before the beginning of time.

Visit my Website - createdtoforest.com/