

Rhythm #2: Listening

"In the morning, long before dawn, [Jesus] got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there." (Mk 1:35)

"The more I read this nearly silent sentence locked in between the loud words of action, the more I have the sense that the secret of Jesus' ministry is hidden in the lonely place where he went to pray, early in the morning, long before dawn.

In the lonely place, Jesus finds the courage to follow God's will and not his own; to speak God's words and not his own; to do God's work and not his own. He reminds us constantly: "By myself I can do nothing...I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me" (Jn 5:20). And again, "What I say to you I do not speak of my own accord: it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his works" (Jn 14:10). It is in the lonely place, where Jesus enters into intimacy with the Father, that his ministry is born." (Henri Nouwen)

Disciple: "A follower; an adherent to the doctrines of another." (Noah Webster, 1828)

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." (John 10:27)

"And now, O sons, listen to me: blessed are those who keep my ways. Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it. Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors. (Proverbs 8:32-34)

"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak..." (James 1:19a)

Real Listening Requires SILENCE

- Getting away from other people
- Shutting out the noise
- Shutting our mouths

Real listening requires PATIENCE

Real listening requires INTENTIONALITY

- Set designated time to be with God
- Eliminate the distractions
- Invite Him in
- Read a short passage of scripture
- Tell Him what your soul is craving
- Listen for His response

A Practice in Listening (Take 20 - 30 minutes)

- Get alone in a quiet place, leaving distractions behind.
- Pray a prayer of invitation. Something simple like, “come, Lord Jesus.”
- When concerns come, tell Him, “Lord, I give you _____, and I rest in you.”
- When your heart is ready, read Mark 10:46-52. Read it slowly. Imagine yourself in the place of blind Bartimaeus. Imagine you are by the roadside, calling out to Him. He hears you, and comes to you and says, “What do you want me to do for you?”
- Search your heart for the answer. Take your time. Listen to your soul. What does it need from God? Then, tell Him. Yes, He knows already, but tell Him anyway. Invite Him into your tender places.
- Wait for Him now. Wait in silence, and listen to His response.
- Journal your thoughts and feelings, or write out a prayer in response

Some really good resources:

Sacred Rhythms (Ruth Haley Barton)

Celebration of Discipline (Richard Foster)

The Sprite of the Disciplines (Dallas Willard)

The Way of the Heart (Henri Nouwen)

Surprise the World (Michael Frost)