

# Hearing God

Suggestions offered by Jane Williams

## God wants to talk with us

“O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let Me see your face. Let Me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.” Song 2:14

## Tune out the noise

- Outer noises - find a quiet place where we won't be interrupted
- Inner noises - deal with stress, busyness, self condemnation (relax, make a “to do” list we can come back to later, confess our sin and accept a robe of righteousness)

## Tune into God - find a way to clear our minds, center our thoughts on Him

- Music, singing (2 Kings 3:15)
- Praise, thanksgiving (Ps 100: 4)
- Posturing - kneeling, walking, prostrating yourself
- Scripture - reading on a planned schedule, lingering on one verse, word study
- Considering Jesus (Heb 12:2 - “looking unto, fixing our eyes upon”)
- Praying scripture - look for prayers in the Bible and repeat them (The Lord's Prayer, Acts 4:24-30), insert your name in various scriptures to personalize them

If one approach is not working, try another. “I will pray with my spirit but I will pray with my mind also (I Cor 14:14).” What was very effective for us at one point may be less effective during another season. Be flexible and open. The key is to open our hearts to God however we can and wait. “Speak for your servant hears.” (I Sam 3:10).

## Keep a Prayer Journal

Journaling can keep our minds occupied and on track while listening. It is helpful sometimes to write out our prayers and what we sense God is saying to us (Hab 2: 1-3, The Book of Psalms). Mark Virkler states: “writing allows you to receive freely the spontaneous flow of ideas that come to your mind, in faith believing that they are Jesus, without short circuiting them by subjecting them to rational and sensory doubt while you are receiving them. You can write in faith believing that they are from the Lord, knowing you can test them later.”

## Many valid ways to hear from and express what we have heard from God

Compare Luke's “orderly account (Luke 1:3),” with John's description in the Book of Revelation of what he experienced while “in the spirit on the Lord's day (Rev 1:10).”

## Listening prayer can result in:

- Silence
- A simple awareness of God
- Understanding scripture
- An approach to a solving a problem or meeting a need

- Guidance for your life
- An urging or desire to do something
- A burden for someone/something
- A word for others (sermon, prophesy, word of knowledge, counsel, letter to a friend)
- Creative ideas related to your job or ministry
- Faith, impartation of spiritual gifts or insights

God wants to integrate our lives through prayer. He will help us in every area through prayer. Just because we start jotting down ideas or picturing something in our minds, it does not mean that we have stopped praying. It may be a higher form of prayer - God speaking to us to benefit ourselves or others. Our prayer life may change form or have different seasons of emphasis.

### **How can I be sure it is God speaking?**

- Overcome fear of deception. Satan always wants us to question whether we have heard from God. ‘Has God said...’ is the first recorded temptation. But we have this assurance: “My sheep know My voice.” John 10:4, Luke 11:10-13
- Learn to recognize God’s voice. He tends to speak gently (I Kings 19:12 - “the still small voice”). His voice produces freedom. His words line up with scripture and with His character. They comfort, edify, exhort. God convicts of specific sins. His voice will not produce confusion, hopelessness or paralyzing fear. It will not be accusatory, condemning or destructive.
- If we are seeking guidance for ourselves or someone else, it is best to try to clear our minds of preconceived ideas and opinions by focusing on God, not the person or situation. Be open. God may ask us to do or say something that makes no sense to us. Often His perspective and methods are radically different than ours. (Is 55:8-9)
- Ask God to confirm what we believe He has spoken. (Jer 32: 6-8, John 7:19)
- Seek counsel for directive words regarding major decisions (Eph 5:21, Heb 13:17) and expect such words to be confirmed by others. Go to those who will pray and ask for spiritual discernment, not just give us their best opinion.

### **Hindrances to Hearing:**

- Bitterness - what is bigger in our mind - past hurts or God?
- Fear - being afraid of what He may tell us to do or is ahead (disciples couldn’t hear about the crucifixion)
- Disobedience - dulls ability to hear - ask ourselves: have we done what’s already been said to us
- Misconceptions about what we are listening for - we may be hearing more than we realize (a quiet inner voice, a scripture seeming to leap off the page, an inner peace settling in, a sense of knowing or understanding coming to us)

### **Expect to hear**

Let’s live our lives in wonderment, staying continually fascinated and expectant.