

LISTENING PRAYER TIPS

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED . . .

DONT SKIP THE PREPARATION:

Don't forget to "set the stage." An invitational prayer may look a bit like a formula, but it really isn't. God doesn't need a ritual, but it does help us calm OUR spirit and trust the words we hear.

1. Invite Jesus to come and affirm God's promise that He will be there with a suitable scripture.
2. Confirm the promises of John 10:3-4
3. Bind your own way of thinking in the name of Jesus
4. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the ability to recognize God's voice.
5. Sit quietly. If a thought comes into your mind, write it down.

FORMING THE QUESTIONS:

Our human tendency is to ask for a roadmap. We just want to know what to do.

We need to remember that God is more interested in having a relationship with us than He is in giving us "marching orders."

Ask "what do you want me to KNOW; not what do you want me to DO!"

We have also learned that "why" questions seldom get answered. Many times the why is not for us to know—at least for now. God often asks us to trust that He is working out things in the way that is ultimately best for everyone involved.

THIS IS BETWEEN YOU AND GOD:

Listening Prayer is meant to help strengthen your personal relationship and understanding of God.

Only on the rarest of occasions will God give you information in Listening Prayer for someone else.

If you feel He has, proceed cautiously. If you decide to share it with the other person, say "I thought I heard _____ in prayer. Does that mean anything to you?"

If it is from God, it will almost always be a confirmation of something they have already heard or felt, and not something that is a total surprise to them.

TIPS RELATING TO HEARING . . .

IF YOU'RE NOT HEARING ANYTHING

Don't worry if your early attempts feel awkward, or you don't seem to be hearing anything at first.

It sometimes takes a while to tune into God's still, small voice. You won't hear anything audibly. It's more like seeing or hearing it in your mind.

You may need to press through a lot of fear and doubt to gain victory.

Just keep trying. It *will* come.

IF YOU'RE HAVING DOUBTS:

You will periodically have doubts that you're hearing God's voice. That's normal, even after you've been doing it for a while.

Resist the urge to discount what you've heard. Matthew 7:9 says, "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?"

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" You asked to hear his voice. He will not trick or mislead you.

THE WORDS SEEM TOO FAMILIAR:

The words you receive may sound very familiar to you. God may refer to your profession, hobbies, scripture passages or other things that are meaningful to you, to help you understand his message—just as He did in the Bible's parables.

It's easy to think that, because the things He talks about are very personal to us, that they are something of our own making. In actuality, God is simply using a proven communication tactic which uses something the "audience" already knows as a means to teach them about something they don't yet understand.

IF IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE

If you don't understand what God has told you or feel that what you heard contradicts scripture or the words another person has heard, ask for clarification.

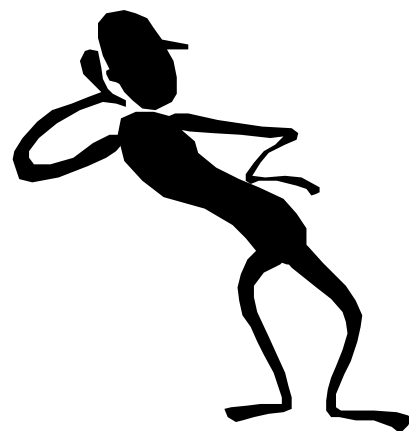
We are certainly not limited to one question per day. We can keep asking and listening until we feel confident that we completely understand what God is telling us.

THERE ARE NO WORDS TO WRITE

God may also speak to you through mental pictures or impressions at times—especially if you tend to be a very visual person.

He is not limited in how he chooses to communicate with us. He'll use whatever way He deems will be most effective.

In these non-verbal cases, simply write down a description of what you are seeing or perceiving.



MORE LISTENING PRAYER TIPS

TIPS ABOUT RECORDING YOUR CONVERSATION . . .

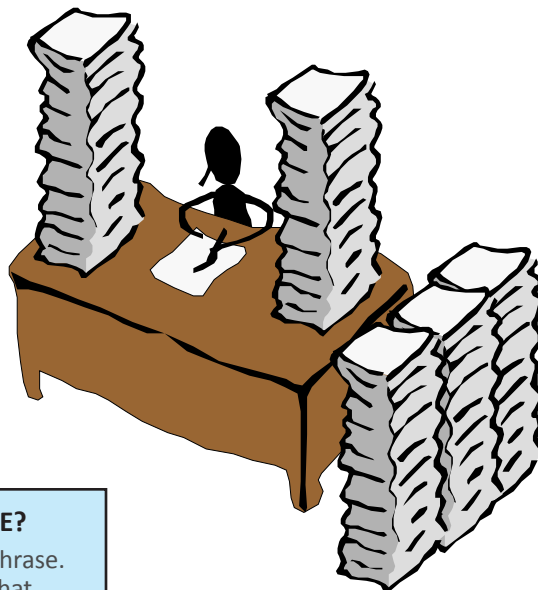
WRITE DOWN YOUR QUESTION:

Be sure to write down the questions you ask. They will likely be meaningful to you later on.

We didn't do this for the first year of doing Listening Prayer. Our journals for that year are full of wonderful answers, but we have no recollection of what we were struggling with at the time.

My husband and I also like to put a date on our entries. It helps if we want revisit something God has told us in the past.

It also keeps us accountable. We can't trick ourselves into believing it's only been a day or two since we last intentionally listened to God when a date from two weeks ago is staring us in the face.



DON'T "FIX" IT:

Sometimes the words seem rambling or confusing as you're writing them down.

Writing down exactly what you hear is extremely important. Be careful not to edit as you go.

Discernment will come into play when you finally read it all the way through. Usually it will make much more sense when you read it back than it does while you're still in the writing process.

Do keep in mind that God will not contradict what He has already said in the Bible. If your answer doesn't seem to align with scripture, ask God to help you understand the disconnect. His answers may surprise you.

WHAT YOU ONLY GET A PIECE?

Don't wait to receive a whole phrase. Even if you only get one word that doesn't seem to make sense, write it down. It will usually be followed by other thoughts.

We've also seen times when God gave someone a single word or phrase and additional information was received from a different source, or at a later date, that brought a fuller picture of what God had only hinted at in the initial prayer.

If God uses someone or something else to finish his thought, be sure to go back to your journal page and write some notes about "the rest of the story."

HOW TO HAVE LIFE-CHANGING CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD:

EXPECT to hear something

WAIT to hear something. Don't be impatient. Stay in the listening.

WRITE what you hear. Writing is the first step in owning it.

CONFIRM what you heard with scripture and via the Holy Spirit, in His time