

Hearing God for Others

PURSUING GOD'S PRESENCE - Small Group Resource

The ability to hear God speak to us is an important aspect of discipleship for every believer. Jesus says in John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice ..." That means every believer can and should hear from God. Although that will be as unique as each one of us is unique, the fact remains that we should each be able to discern His voice for ourselves. No matter where you or your small group members are at in your journey of hearing God, you can grow in learning how to hear, recognize and follow His voice in your life in a safe and practical way!

Small Group Dialogue

- When you consider the variety of people mentioned in the Bible as having heard from God, who stands out to you and why?
- Describe a time that you thought you heard God speak to you. What was that like for you?
- Have you witnessed growth in your ability to recognize God's voice? Why or why not?
- What are some of the ways that you think that God speaks to you?
- How do you discern His voice from the other thoughts/emotions/pressures going on inside of you?
- Has God ever prompted you to reach out to or encourage someone? Did you follow through with it? Why or why not? What was the outcome?
- Have you ever felt like God was speaking to you through what someone else was saying? What were some of the indicators that made you think it was from God?
- Have you ever witnessed people claiming to speak on God's behalf that didn't sit right with you? What were some of the cues that made you question the origin or authenticity of the message?

Sometimes God may want to speak to us about a situation that we are in and it's only for us. Other times it's for somebody else that we are to share with them. This can be a tremendous blessing for each of you in your group.

If hearing God is new to any of you, you may feel hesitation over this. It may be outside of someone's comfort zone, or you may say, "I'm terrified of it because I had a bad experience in the past." Hearing God is to be a normal and regular practice for all believers. It can be a rewarding and positive facet of our journey, especially when we follow some guidelines and safeguards to help us have a good experience. We encourage you to trust God in this process of learning how to hear from Him.

Hearing God for Others Small Group Exercise

A. Leader Instructions

1. Have group members break into triad groups of three, preferably with the same gender.
2. Explain the exercise to the group members by walking through the steps in section B.
3. The exercise can be done in about 15 to 30 minutes. It may be helpful to track the time for each step and guide your group through it, giving a 30-second warning to wrap up where needed.
4. Pray an opening prayer before you begin. Pray:
 - For protection over your time together and for God to silence any distractions.
 - Against the enemy for speaking or interfering in any way.
 - For freedom for Jesus to speak to us.
 - To invite the Holy Spirit to be present, to guide your time and to bring glory to God.

B. Steps and Guidelines

- **ASK** – In the triad, ask Jesus the simple question, “Lord Jesus, what do you have to say to _____ (name of the person for whom you are listening)?”

- **LISTEN** – In silence, each triad person listens for that person. Allow one to two minutes for this step. Pay attention to:
 - Flow of thoughts and ideas.
 - Pictures you see inside.
 - Visions (moving pictures).
 - Words or phrases that come to mind.
 - Scripture (quotes or references).
 - Emotions or body pains that aren't your own.
- **TEST** – In silence, each triad person takes a moment to confirm with God that what they are hearing, seeing or sensing is appropriate to share.
 - If it contradicts Scripture, don't share it – just let it go.
 - It passes the test of 1 Corinthians 14:3, "But the one who prophesies speaks to the people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort." If what you heard is negative or difficult, ask God to show you how it can be said so that it is strengthening, encouraging or comforting. If that doesn't become clear, don't share it.
- **SHARE** – Triad members can then share what they heard for the person. Offer it simply and straightforwardly. Allow three to seven minutes for this step.
 - There is no pressure to perform. If nothing comes to mind, don't make something up. This can be more damaging for the person. In this case, simply say "pass" or "I have nothing to share."
 - Don't embellish, exaggerate or over-analyze what you heard.
 - Offer it open-handedly with humility for the recipient to discern. They may have further questions or respond with "I'll have to think about that" or "Hmm, I'm not sure what to do with that" or "Thanks, that means a lot to me."
- **DISCERN** – As the one receiving the words, talk to God about any questions or response you may have to what the triad members have shared.
 - If you were encouraged, let your triad know.
 - If you are concerned or unsettled by what you heard, let your small group leader or pastor know.
- **REPEAT** – Move on to the next person in the triad, taking time to listen for them, repeating steps 1 to 5 until each person has had a turn being listened for.

Additional Leader Resources

- "Hearing God" Small Group Study
- *Whisper* by Mark Batterson
- *Can you hear me?* by Brad Jersak
- Encounter God Retreat