

Listen Well!

Practical Keys to Hearing and Responding to Preaching

Bible Study 1—Jonathan Moore

Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away. —Luke 8:18

I. Do you hear preaching? Worship well!

- A. Preaching is intended to open up and expose the Word of God to the audience, and it also exposes *the soul* of the hearer, expecting to produce real change in the life.
- The life and health and growth of our souls are tied to how well we listen.
 - Expect to have heart change—worship and obey!
- B. Preaching is a “conversation”; it is a joint effort that requires activity from both the preacher and the hearer.
- Preachers must put in effort, but hearers must also.
 - Expect to have a conversation—listen actively!

II. Before you hear preaching—prepare well.

- A. Realize that preaching is a gift.
- B. Realize that responding to preaching is a responsibility.
- C. Realize that preparation is necessary—hard ground won't allow anything to grow
- a. Pray for yourself and the preacher
 - b. Read over the text for the upcoming sermon

- c. Confess your sins and needs
 - d. Use Saturday evening well: get enough sleep
 - e. Arrive on time
 - f. Be silent before the service
 - g. Arrive expectantly—come ready to hear and obey.
 - h. Remind yourself that God is going to speak.
- D. Realize the difference between hearing and listening: hearing is easy; listening is hard
- E. Realize listening takes practice. Just as an athlete must work out regularly and a musician must practice daily, so you must work consistently to be an effective listener.

III. As you hear preaching—listen well.

- A. The attitude of active listening
- Take responsibility for your role
 - Recognize the need for the Spirit
 - Continue praying that God will speak to you by His Word
 - Decide to listen and to be attentive and reverent
- B. The practice of active listening
- Remove distractions
 - Look...at the speaker and the text
 - Engage—pretend there will be a test after it's over
 - a. Plan to present the same message to a different audience later

- b. Take brief notes: but focus on the main point; don't write down everything. Effective note-taking will require you to think.
- B. Orient—read actively; get an idea of what is in the text
- C. State—in one word, what is the message about
 - a. Focus on the main idea
 - b. Don't pay too much attention to the details as that can get you away from the topic—details are more difficult to remember and are to support the topic
 - c. Early on, form an idea of what it's all about, then see how each piece contributes to the whole
- D. Organize
 - a. Work to understand how the preacher got to the main point
 - b. Your brief notes should establish how the points fit together and point to the main topic
- E. Interact
 - a. Paraphrase the preacher's main point in a different way than he stated it
 - b. Write down questions and see how they are answered
 - c. Ask "what are the next steps or alternatives?"
- F. Write
 - a. Make particular application to your own heart
 - b. What did he ask me to do with this info?

- c. How can the sermon help love and obey God more?
serve others better?
- d. Writing down the main idea will aid your
understanding and retention

IV. After you hear preaching—respond well

- A. Remember—Pray that God will apply the Word and bring it to
mind
- B. Repeat—Talk about it with other believers...soon after the
message
 - Ask follow-up questions of others who hear
 - Talk through your personal application; explain what will it
look like for you and ask for input.
 - Provide feedback to the pastor
- C. Reflect—Write it down
 - Consult it each morning
 - Pray for wise living
- D. Respond—Obey and live the truth (John 8:31)
 - Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly
my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings.”
 - The amount of knowledge the disciples possessed was far
less important than what they did with that knowledge.
- E. Revere—Worship God because He is transforming you into His
Son’s image. Your heart should be compelled to respond.

V. Do you hear preaching? Repent well!

- A. Drifting is dangerous! Don’t become dull (John 8:43, 47, 10:4,
27)

B. Heed warnings! Listen and obey (Matt 13—parable of soils—is about listening; Jam 1:19–25)

Listening well requires listening actively. It assumes that God is communicating through preaching and that we desire to obey and worship God. Use these simple tools to listen well: take brief notes, summarize in one-word, pretend there will be a test.

“There is no telling the dynamic impact the Spirit of God will make through the Word of God any time someone who faithfully explains and applies God’s Word comes into contact with someone who faithfully listens to and obeys God’s Word.” ~Quinn?