



The word “posture” is often used to describe our physical position during an activity. And in many cases our “posture” can make a significant difference in the outcome. Take exercising for example. If you have poor posture during exercising you are at risk of hurting your back, injuring your muscles or significantly reducing the success of the exercise. In short, your posture matters!

The same can be said when it comes to listening. Your posture - meaning your attitude and your approach when listening - is very important. If the posture of your heart and mind while listening is not right, you are risking missing what’s important.

We begin our study of the theme for 2024, “Listen”, with an examination of what it means to have a posture of listening during prayer.

6 Helpful Understandings

The Bible talks a lot about listening. In fact, the word listen is used 265 times throughout Scripture. But how do we as Christians properly prepare ourselves to listen to God? Embracing a listening posture before God is more than just sitting and not speaking. A listening posture involves our mind, body and spirit. It means approaching God with the same attitude as young Samuel in 1 Samuel 3:10: “*Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.*” Below are 6 helpful understandings as we think about our approach and attitude towards listening prayer.

1. **Stillness:** A listening posture prioritizes stillness. The quiet calmness before God where you surrender the distractions and worries of life over to the Lord.

“You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise, you perceive my thoughts from afar.” (Psalm 139)

2. **Waiting:** Waiting is hard. We want things immediately. However, God doesn’t work on our timeline. A waiting posture before the Lord is the process of giving God the time and space to speak. How often do you ask God for something and then give him only a few moments to answer? Is it because we don’t really expect that He will respond? Wait with anticipation, and actively listen until He speaks.

“I wait patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry.” (Psalm 40:1)

3. **Humility:** A posture of listening requires humility. If you are really going to hear God and others you have to be willing to not be right and to see something new.

“Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.” (John 8:47)

4. **Openness:** What if God says something you don't want to hear? Are you ok with God changing your plans and directing you towards a different path? Sometimes we pray for wisdom but we lack the posture of openness to change course when God redirects. Instead we take a "I'll pray it into existence!" mindset.

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you." (Psalm 32:8)

5. **Expecting:** Do you expect and anticipate that God will speak? A posture of expecting is a mindset that comes before God in prayer believing an answer from God will come.

"In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before You and wait in expectation." (Psalm 5:3)

6. **Delighting:** A posture of listening is delighting in the process of silence, peace, waiting and expecting. Give thanks. Express love. Be present and enjoy the time with your Father in Heaven.

"I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God." (Isaiah 61:10)



Devotional Study

FEBRUARY

A Posture of Listening

Take a moment and reflect on the devotional questions below. Allow God to teach and deepen your understanding of a posture of listening before God.

After reviewing the “6 Helpful Understandings” from the devotional above, which understandings do you struggle with the most? Why? Which are easier for you? Why?

From your experience, are there any key understandings missing from above that you believe are important elements to a posture of listening?

Read John 10:27-28, Jeremiah 33:3, Isaiah 55:11

What encouragement do you receive from these verses? How do these promises inspire you to approach God with a posture of listening?

Read Mark 1:35, John 5:19-20, John 5:30

Reflect on the words Jesus uses in these verses to talk about his relationship with the Father. What actions, beliefs, priorities, and expectations do you see here? What posture did Jesus take before the Father? What actions could you take to follow Jesus Example?

Read 2 Cor 12:7-10

Take a moment to identify Paul's posture here in these verses. Where do we see some of the understandings from above? (Waiting, expecting, humility, openness, delighting). What can we learn and apply from Paul's approach?

Finish by taking a time of listening prayer.

- What is on your mind today? What would you like God to do? Paul wanted to be healed; what do you want? Write a question for God:
- Be still and Wait - take a few deep breaths. If there are distractions, intentionally set them aside.
- Check your heart - are you humble and open to whatever God would say? Turn it into a prayer, "Please help me to be ready to hear You."
- Expect to hear. Write down anything that comes to mind and then reflect. Does it feel like it's from God?
- Delight in the Lord. - If you do not hear anything, ask again and wait, expecting. If you hear something, thank and praise Him, even if it is not the answer you wanted. If you do not hear, thank and praise Him for being with You and working in ways you cannot see yet.