

LISTENING ALONGSIDE



ECHOING CHRIST

Lenten Devotions 2017

**Sunday,
April 2, 2017**

Throughout this Lenten devotion series, in addition to sharing reflections from members of the congregation and other poems, quotes, and thoughts about listening for God, we will also offer suggestions for spiritual exercises or disciplines that may be useful as we seek to listen alongside one another and learn better how to echo the life and teachings of Christ.

The following listening method was first published in a brochure called *How to Listen to God* by John E. Batterson, which provided a strong influence for the beginnings of the Alcoholics Anonymous movement. This method also influenced, and is more fully described in Carol Boseman Taylor's devotional guide, *I Promise. Rejoice!*

1. Take time. Find a place and time when you can be alone, quiet, and undisturbed.
2. Relax. Sit comfortably, relax your muscles, and do not be in a hurry.
3. Tune in. Open your heart and focus your thoughts on God. Ask God to speak to you.
4. Listen. Be still, quiet, relaxed, and open. Be alert and open to every thought and idea.
5. Write. This is key to the whole process. Write down everything that comes into your mind. Everything! Don't sort or edit your thoughts. Write names, your to do list, good thoughts, bad thoughts, or anything else that enters your mind.
6. Test. When the flow of thoughts slows down, stop writing. Look at what you've written and test your thoughts. For each item on your list, ask if it is completely *honest, pure, unselfish, and loving*.
7. Obey. For each thing you have written that is completely *honest, pure, unselfish, and loving*, act on it. Did you think of a person? Touch base with them to see how they are doing or what they might need. Did you think of a wrong that needs to be made right, a cause or need in the world, something you should do or say? Follow through, and act on those thoughts.

"When man listens, God speaks. When man obeys, God acts. This is the law of prayer."

—John E. Batterson

From *I Promise. Rejoice!* by Carol Boseman Taylor

To what have I called you? You know that one thing for which I Have tapped you is prayer—prayer for your family and for all the people and circumstances I bring to your mind. Your is to listen and obey. Mine is to answer. I've already heard. I just want you to hear my nudging of your heart. Listen. Obey. The answer will follow. I promise. Rejoice!¹

Prayer

Light from light.

Creation from chaos.

Life from death.

Joy from sorrow.

Hope from despair.

Peace from hate.

All your gifts, all your love, all your power.

All from your word, fresh from your word,

all gifts of your speech.

We give thanks for your world-forming speech.

Thanks as well for our speech back to you,

the speech of mothers and fathers who dared to speak

in faith and unfaith, in trust and in distrust,

in grateful memory and in high hurt.

We cherish this speech as we trust yours.

Listen this day for the groans and yearnings of your world,

listen to our own songs of joy and our own drudges of death,

and in the midst of our stammering,

speaking your clear word of life

in the name of your word come flesh. Amen.

—Walter Brueggemann

From *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth*

¹Carol Boseman Taylor. *I Promise. Rejoice!* Nurturing Faith Publishers, Macon, GA. 2015. p. 42.

Psalm 5:1-3

Give ear to my words, O Lord;
give heed to my sighing.

Listen to the sound of my cry,
my King and my God,
for to you I pray.

O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice;
in the morning I plead my case to you, and watch.

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”