

A Listening Ear

Contributor: Annie

Scriptures:

Isaiah 6

Isaiah 30:21

1 Samuel 3

Psalm 116:2

These days, it is a great practice to respond by saying "Well done, great listening", to a child that obeys when they are doing something dangerous or foolhardy and are told to stop, or when they are following instructions in how to accomplish a task. As a child of our Father God, I long to hear that same response one day from Him.

God is never shy of wanting to keep us safe or desiring that we learn how to carry out the purpose He has planned for our lives. The biggest stumbling block in achieving this goal is our lack of listening, sometimes deliberately, but more often than not because we are not skilled at it. We respond so much more adeptly to what our senses tell us than what God, through His Holy Spirit, is telling us.

The prophet Isaiah knew all about listening to God's voice. After the seraphim had taken the coal from the altar (Isaiah 6) and cleansed his lips, he heard the voice of God asking "Who shall I send?", he replied "send me". His response was evidence not only that he had heard God, but that he had listened to what was said. Then God told him what to say to the nation, instructions that included telling the people to keep on hearing but not to understand. Does that mean they couldn't understand the language he would use to speak to them? No, it means that they would not let the words sink deeply into themselves, that his words would merely be another noise. In other words, they simply would not listen.

Later on, in chapter 30:21, Isaiah speaks of hearing a voice in our ear directing us which way to walk. This is a profound picture. God is so close that He can speak directly into our ear. By any form of reasoning, there is no way, being that close, that God is going to bellow in our ear, there is no need to do that. His instruction is only for us, it is the path WE have to walk, so we alone need to hear and listen to His direction. The depth of God's love for us means He is able to speak directly to each of us, in a tone that is for us alone, in a whisper as soft as a gentle breeze. Our response will depend entirely on how well we listen, not on whether we have heard.

As a boy, the prophet Samuel lived in the house of the Lord with Eli the priest. He heard the Voice of God but assumed it was Eli calling him, until, on the third time, Eli perceived it was God and instructed Samuel how to respond. When we are young in our walk with Christ, we may well need instruction on how to recognise the Voice of God.

Listening to God comes with practice and diligence. Alone-time with God is so important as we draw closer to Him, getting to know Him through His word and through prayer. Lately I learnt that a mother zebra removes herself and her new born foal from the herd because, just as fingerprints are unique, the pattern of stripes on a zebra's forehead is unique and the foal needs this alone-time to learn how to recognise its mother. Recognition of our Father is essential if we are to learn to listen.

God inclines His Ear to us. He listens intently to us at all times. Therefore, for us to live protected and walking the path He has for us, we must listen as intently to Him.

Prayer: Abba Father, as we hear Your Voice speaking in our ear, teach us how to listen intently and diligently. In Jesus Name, Amen.