

SMALL GROUP SESSION

LISTENING

By the Rev. Glenn H. Turner

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:

I like to talk with you.

I like the way I feel
when you are listening
as if we were exploring
something in ourselves:

The plunge into a silence
and how you come up with words
I tried to find:

The otherness about us which makes
conversation possible.

When I talk with you,
the give turns into take
and borrow into lend.

Now and then, a phrase from you
will kindle like a shooting star;
the mornings in you rouse me from a sleep.

I like the babble and the banter when I greet you
at the door,
and when the room is filled with guests,
your quiet look,
as if there were a secret between us
of which nobody knows.

- from Raymond Baughan

CHECK IN: (40 - 50 minutes)

What you share may be about your physical or spiritual health, cares or concerns for loved ones, issues you are facing.

Each person in the group speaks uninterrupted, if time remaining, general response and conversation is welcome. Confidentiality.

FOCUS: Listening

“When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving advice, you have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I shouldn’t feel that way, you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problem, you have failed me, strange as that may seem.

Listen! All I asked was that you listen, not talk or do - just hear me.

Advice is cheap. 10 cents will get you both Dear Abby and Billy Graham in the same newspaper. (That dates this writing.)

And I can do for myself. I'm not helpless. Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless. When you do something for me that I can do for myself, you contribute to my fear and inadequacy.

But when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel, no matter how irrational, then I can quit trying to convince you and can get about the business of understanding what's behind this irrational feeling. And when that's clear, the answers are obvious and I don't need advice.

Irrational feelings make sense when we understand what's behind them.

Perhaps that's why prayer works, sometimes, for some people -- because God is mute and he/she doesn't give advice or try to fix things. "They" just listen and let you work it out for yourself.

So please listen and just hear me. And, if you want to talk, wait a minute for your turn, and I'll listen to you."

- Ralph Roughton

Discussion:

Have you ever felt like that? Examples?

Why do you think it is so hard to simply listen?

Who is the best listener in your life?

What can we do in this group to improve the quality of listening?

Note: you don't have to use all these questions.

LIKES AND WISHES

How did this session go for you? Is there anything you'd like to call particular attention to?

CLOSING WORDS:

Too communicate is the beginning of understanding.

To feel is the beginning of self-growth.

To touch is the beginning of involvement.

To love, the beginning of all that will ever be.

- Nancy Ceranowicz

May we learn to listen - to respond, to feel,
to grow, to touch the life that is in everyone,
to love.