

The Healing Power of Listening

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To be known AND loved.

I am more sinful than I ever dared believe, and I am more loved than I ever dared hope.

Am I, are we, a safe place for others to be real and honest?

The Lost Art of Listening - "Without a sufficient amount of sympathetic understanding in our lives we're haunted by an amorphous unease that leaves us anxious and lonely."

And about stress and being worn out "it may not be overwork that wears us down, but a lack of understanding in our lives. Chief among the missing elements is the attention and appreciation of... people who care and **listen to us with interest.**"

And when our relationships aren't truly satisfying, "We seek excitement, enthusiasm, responsiveness, gratification – the same kinds of feelings that can be had from a long heart-to-heart talk with someone we care about. But without the ballast of someone to talk to, some of us will continue to drown out the silence, as though without some kind of electronic entertainment to distract us, we may hear the low rumblings of despair."

Parallel monologues

James 1:19 - Most violated command in scripture? "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry..."

"The essence of good listening is empathy, which can be achieved only by suspending our preoccupation with ourselves and entering into the experience of the other person. LAL, p. 10.

Phil. 2:3-4 – "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

And what a compliment Paul says about Timothy - Phil. 2:20-21 "I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. ²¹ For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ."

The gospel is a perfect picture of empathy. And empathy is a powerful tool for showing God's love.

Some simple tools include 3 aspects of active listening –

Reflecting – both content and emotion.

Clarifying – this will be a question.

Asking is there more?

Doing these steps is a way to make the conversation truly productive so you don't need to keep having the same one over and over.

When someone hears both our pain and our joys, we find greater connection. Someone trusts you enough to tell you their hopes, dreams, thoughts, feelings, we need to acknowledge that and not disregard it. Psalm 116:1-2.

I challenge you to think about who you'd like to give this gift to.