

Meet Up 10 - Listening Deeper

5 minutes

Preparing our hearts.

The leader might say something like,
(Introduce the purpose of 3Story® Team, if necessary.)

One of the most important actions we take in 3Story® is listening well. We highlight listening when we talk about discovering other people's stories. Sometimes we take it for granted that we know how to listen well, but sometimes when I'm listening, I start thinking about how I will respond to the person who is speaking...or I get distracted by the next task on my daily agenda. My ability to listen gets smaller when I begin to multitask like this.

Quieting our hearts and minds helps us listen deeper; to ourselves, to God and to others. So, as we begin our time together, let's do that.

Close your eyes, take some deeper breaths and try to quiet your mind.

As thoughts or distractions come to mind, just place them in an imaginary drawer—you can take them out later.

And as your heart begins to quiet, recognize that you sit in the presence of the loving gaze of God. He's pleased to be with you, try to absorb that.

After a few minutes, I will close our time of silence with a prayer.

Facilitator, watch time and allow approximately three to five minutes for silent reflection and then close with a brief prayer.

15 minutes

Abiding together.

The leader might say something like,

Have you ever had anyone ask you a question about how you're doing, and you answer honestly, perhaps even sharing something personal? And the person listening responds with quick advice or a Bible verse or an encouraging word? It seems like their intent is good and we should be grateful...but often, quick responses reflect the other person's experience, not your own.

I think there's a good reason that James, the brother of Jesus says, "Be quick to listen, slow to speak ..." James 1: 19

Be quick to listen. Listening well takes work. It goes beyond paying attention to the speaker. People who listen well pay attention to three voices:

- *We listen to the speaker.*
- *We listen to your own responses/thought/actions.*
- *We listen to God in the moment—as the speaker is sharing.*

Leader Formation YFC/USA

3Story® Teams

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As a team today I'd like to invite us into a listening exercise so we can practice listening to the speaker, listening to our own selves and listening to God.

Here's how we'll do that:

In a moment I will give you an assignment, some questions to ponder, and time to think about your answers. Then, we will take time sharing our responses. And we will follow a pattern that helps us practice listening to each other, to ourselves, and to God by being quiet together after each person shares.

Here's the assignment to ponder:

It's an average day.

Imagine observing your reflection in a mirror.

Notice what's on your mind.

What are your most constant/loudest thoughts?

What feelings are you aware of?

What are you typically reacting to? Are you avoiding any actions?

What words come to mind as you describe what you see?

(Spend 2-3 minutes responding to these).

Now imagine Jesus stands with you, what words does Jesus whisper as he stands next to you and observes you.

(Spend 2-3 minutes responding to these).

25 minutes. Dwelling Together

We're going to take time sharing now. I'm going to ask _____ to go first. After he/she shares, I will invite us to stay silent for a moment. During that silent space, I'll ask you to: Notice your own reactions. In other words, listen to yourself. What did you think, feel, or notice has the last person shared? Write down anything that comes to mind.

Then, in silence, ask God if there is something He wants you to notice based on what the last person has shared.

After we've been silent, I will offer a prayer of thanks for that person's story and call on the next person.

Example:

(1-2 minutes) Teddi shares what she noticed as she watches her reflection and then what she thinks Jesus might whisper to her as He looks at her reflection.

(1-2 min) Leader says, thanks Teddi. Let's all be quiet for a moment. Listeners, you should note your own personal reactions to what Teddi shared. In other words, listen to yourself. And as you're quiet, ask the Father if there's something special He wants you to pay attention to as you reflect on what was shared.

(10 sec) Leader prays, "Father, for Teddi, and for all you are doing in her life, we give you praise. Amen."

5 minutes. Closing Time

The leader might say something like,

What do you notice about listening from this exercise?

What applications for relationships with others might you take from this exercise?

What would it look like for this team to practice listening deeper on a regular basis? What would have to shift?