

DEPENDING ON THE SPIRIT

God's Voice Still Speaks

Much of Scripture assumes that God actively communicates with his people. Acts 1, for example, tells us how Jesus told his disciples to wait to pursue God's mission until they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. If this was true for them, it makes sense that it would be for us today. To do the work Jesus sends us to do on campus, we *need* to depend on the Holy Spirit.

Listening Prayer Keeps Us Connected

Listening Prayer is a helpful tool that InterVarsity staff, students, and faculty across the country have used when it comes to depending on the Holy Spirit.

What is Listening Prayer?

Listening prayer is any kind of prayer that requires us to calm our minds and souls to silently focus on listening to God's voice. Prayer involves a two-way conversation between people and God. When we pray, we present our thanks, praises, and requests to God. As disciples of Jesus, we also seek to learn from Jesus and be led by the Holy Spirit in every area of our lives.

Leading a Guided Listening Prayer Exercise

Set-Up

1. Keep the lights on. You don't want to create something out of the ordinary or give an impression of emotional manipulation when it comes to listening prayer. Make it feel as normal as possible.
2. If you're in a setting where worship is happening, stop the music. Let people listen to God in silence (for the same reasons given in #1).
3. Ask people to stand with their palms up. In Hebrew and Christian spirituality, the mind and body are one. Standing helps us be more alert and attentive. The palms up posture signals receptiveness to whatever God might say.
4. Don't force people to do this if they are not comfortable. You can say something like, "If at any time you feel uncomfortable and want to opt out, that's okay. God won't force anything, and I won't either. I encourage you to try it out, but I also give full permission to opt out."

Prompt

Here is a sample script (for more, visit [the online course](#)). Read the text slowly, pausing between instructions to give participants time to imagine the scene.

Ezekiel 37: Dry Bones

In your mind's eye, imagine that you have been transported to a valley. It's big valley, parched, and cracked. There are dry bones—strewn all around you, as far as you can see. What are you thinking? How do you feel?

As you look at the dry bones, you have the sense that they represent something in your life. Maybe it's a place of failure, confusion, or even something that feels like death. If you could name what the dry bones represent, what would it be? (In large groups, you can invite people to keep their eyes closed and say aloud 1-2 words that describe what dry bones represent.)

While you're looking at the bones, God shows up on the scene. What is God doing?

He comes up to greet you. How does he greet you?

He tells you to speak to the bones. It's a word from God that you are supposed to say to them. It's clear that God is with you. What do you say? Then what happens? (Let them take the scene where they want to rather than forcing them to have the dry bones be filled with life.)

Share

- Ask the group to share about their interaction with God. It's ok if they don't feel confident in what they heard or said to the bones during the exercise.
- After a while, close the time in prayer, thanking God for speaking to us and to make what we saw clearer. Ask if there is anything else Jesus would like to say.
- Then, sit and listen for a minute...maybe two.
- Write down anything meaningful from that experience to reflect upon later.

Learn More

- James Choung. "Biblical and Historical Foundations for Guided Listening Prayer." Accessed December 4, 2020. <http://evangelism.intervarsity.org/how/pray-and-fast/biblical-and-historical-foundations-guided-listening-prayer>.
- Lina Sánchez-Herrera and Jon Ball, InterVarsity Collegiate Ministries. "Listening Prayer: The Centrality of Scripture and Discernment" Accessed December 4, 2020. <http://collegiateministries.intervarsity.org/resource/listening-prayer-centrality-scripture-and-discernment>
- Dallas Willard, *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012.

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