

# Spiritual Listening

with Nick & Pat Helm

Friday 2 February  
Introducing Spiritual Listening



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## Welcome & Introductions

### Spiritual Listening

- **Spiritual** - 'of the Holy Spirit'
- **Listening**: paying attention to another...
- **Discerning**: seeking & being responsive to God's will, lead, invitation, call...



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## Welcome & Introductions

### This Programme

- **Process** - experiential - learning by doing
- **Purpose**: enable growth as a spiritual listener - to be better able to listen and enable another person to grow more aware and more responsive to God
- **Process**
  - Prayer and Reflection
  - Practical - listening groups
  - Reflection groups
  - Input
  - Demonstrations



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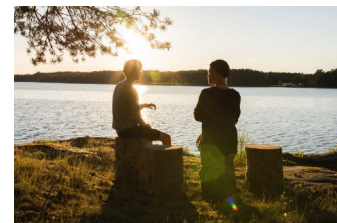
## Welcome & Introductions

### Why are you here?

- What hopes do you have for this time?
- What are you looking for?

### What experience are you bringing?

- Where in life do you find yourself listening to others?



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## Welcome & Introductions

### Ground Rules for a safe and spiritually nurturing environment

- Mutual respect - to be with each other without judging
- Confidentiality - to never share what is not ours to share
- Seeking God - and avoid ourselves getting in the way!



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## Prayer

### Reflection

- Look back - when I have been listened to...

### Talk to Jesus

- About your experiences of being listened to



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## Listening Groups

### Process

- Each has a **turn to share** something of their prayer experience
- When a person is sharing everyone else **listens in silence** - no verbal response
- When the person who is sharing has finished **leave a silence of about a minute** to honour them and what they have shared
- What is shared in the group is **confidential**



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## Listening

### Process

- How can I listen to someone in a way that enables them to be better aware of God?
- Three way listening
  - God
  - Myself
  - Other person



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## Listening

### Fruit of the Spirit

- Galatians 5
- Fruit
  - love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control
- How do we know these things?
  - Emotions and behaviour



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## Listening

### Ignatius of Loyola

- you can discern God by the Holy Spirit
- noticing your inner reactions
- examining their origin - which are God centred, which are not?



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## Listening

### Ignatius of Loyola

- Where I am God centred in my hopes and longings - the things that are God centred will have good effect
- Where I am not God centred in my longings, things that are God centred will feel uncomfortable
- Gal 5 - fruit of Spirit



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## Listening

### Ignatius of Loyola

- Gift
  - Helps draw closer to God
  - Receiving love and grace
- Challenge
  - Paying attention to what we don't often pay attention to



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## Reflection Groups



### Paying attention

- Growing as a spiritual listener
- What effects I noticed from
  - Talking about my spiritual experience
  - Listening to another's spiritual experience

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## Discernment



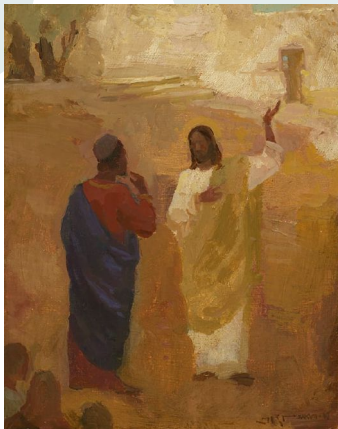
### Luke 18 - Rich ruler

Story of discernment

- **longing for God**
- recognises much **pulls away from God**
- **tension** in this situation
- **choice**

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## Discernment

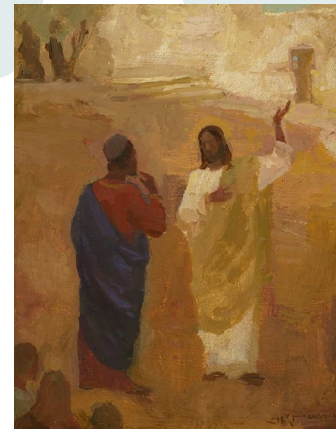


### 4 stages of discernment

1. **Longing for God** (this centres us)
2. **Acknowledge pulls away from God** (this keeps us real)
3. **In particular situation - notice different pulls & tension** (this helps us choose)
4. **Choose the God centred pull** (this is our active response)

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## Ending



### Reflect

- Where in my life at present do I notice longing for God?
- Where do I notice pulls away from God?
- What do the tensions feel like?

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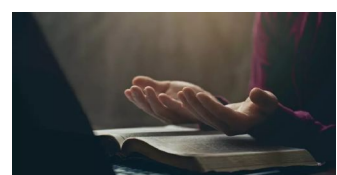
Saturday 3 February  
The Process of Prayer & Discerning Listening



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## Prayer

### Process of Prayer



- **Approach:** recognise God's welcome, ask for what you seek
- **Activity:** whatever is appropriate
- **Review:** notice & talk to God

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## Listening for Life

### Remember discernment steps




1. **Longing for God** (this centres us)
2. **Acknowledge pulls away from God** (this keeps us real)
3. **In particular situation - notice different pulls & tension** (this helps us choose)
4. **Choose the God centred pull** (this is our active response)



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## Listening for Life

### 3. notice the different pulls




energy - lift / drain  
peace - disturbance  
lively - listless  
light - heavy  
light - dark  
compassion - rejection

**Notice the different feel.**

*Which is more God centred?*

*Which is fruit of the Spirit?*



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## Listening for Life

### 4. Choose God centred



**Moses:** I put before you life or death. *Choose life!* Deut 30.19

**Jesus:** I have come to bring life. Life in its fullness! John 10.10

**Paul:** Keep in step with the Spirit. Gal 5.25

Ask for God's help & take action.

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## Listening for Life

### As a listener



**Notice** (as you listen)

- longing for God
- tensions
- fruit of the Spirit

**Choose:** Which is most important to draw attention to?

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## Listening for Life

### As a listener



#### Act by Responding:

(Some possible responses)

I noticed... (life)

Say some more about... (life)

Are you noticing where the life is in what you are saying?

What were you hoping for?

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## Praying discerningly

"The Ignatian Examen"

### God's view of our life



A six step process:

1. Ask God to show you...
2. Look back for life giving moments
3. Give thanks
4. Look back for life draining moments
5. Ask for forgiveness / mercy
6. Look forward - ask for what you need

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