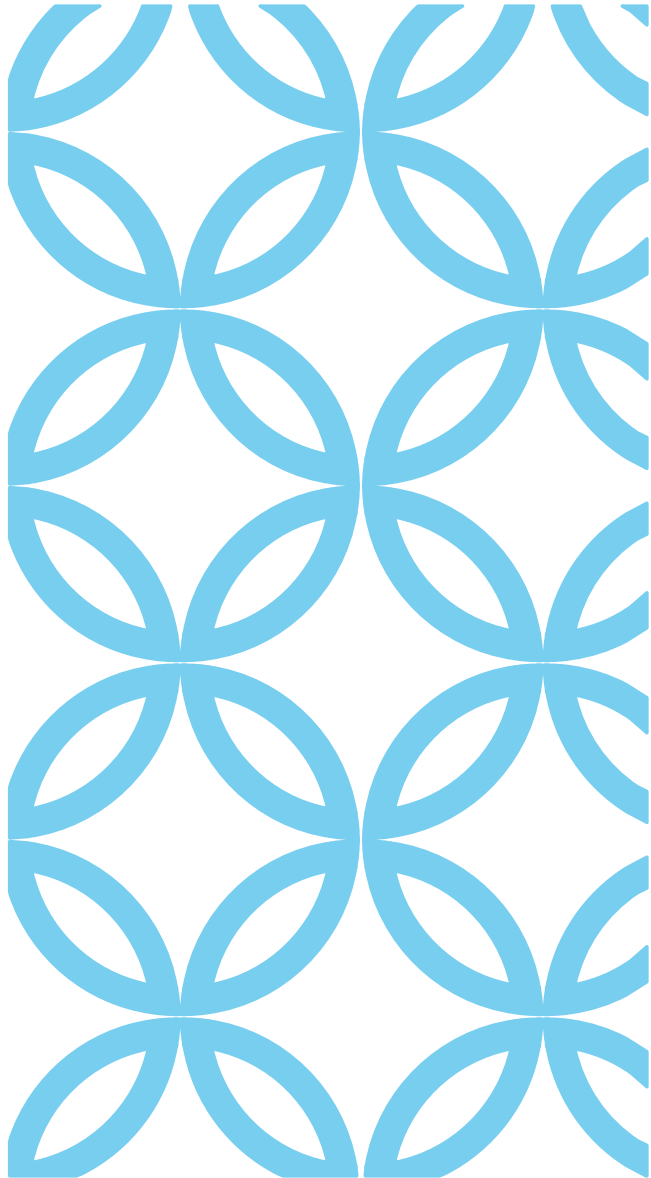


**NASSAU
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
DEACONS**

**ACTIVE LISTENING &
PASTORAL CARE**





Holy One, you have invited us into this time of learning and sharing together.

Silence the distractions of our minds and draw us to you.

Help us to listen well to one another and to your Spirit as we reflect on the ministry of care to which you have called us.

Bless each one of us that we may be a blessing to others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Our Opening Prayer

OPENING EXERCISE

PART 1 (PAPER & PEN)



With your eyes closed:

Take a moment to recall a time when you needed someone to listen to you. Perhaps you were struggling with a significant decision and desired a sounding board.

As you hark back to that experience, consider these questions: How did it feel for someone to listen to you? What did that person do, or not do, that conveyed you were being listened to in that moment?

OPENING EXERCISE

PART 2

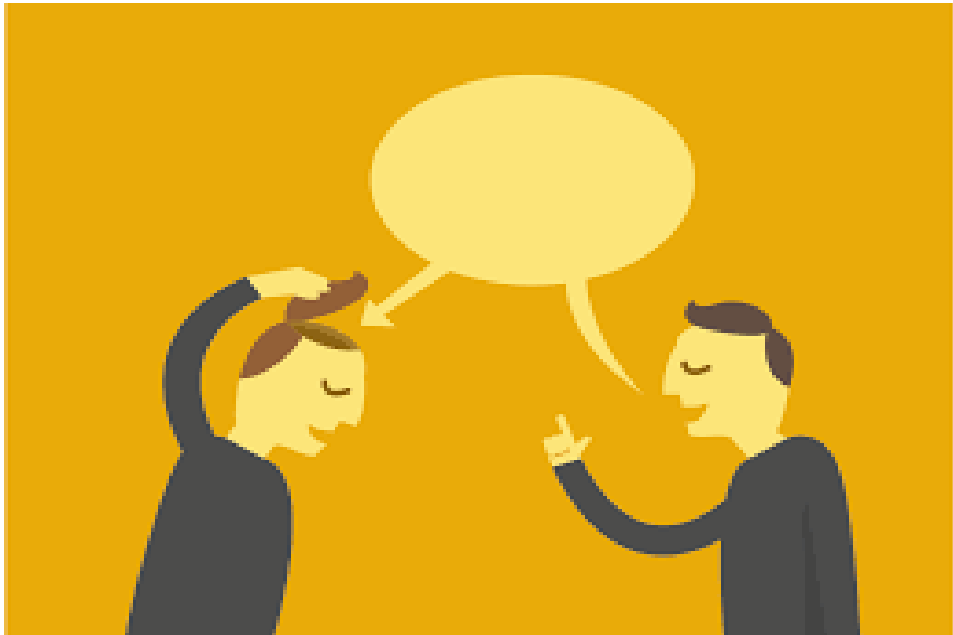
Now, take a moment to recall a time when you needed someone to listen to you with the same degree and urgency just noted and this listening did not occur.



When you identify this experience, consider these questions: How did it feel when that person did not listen? What did the person do, or fail to do, that conveyed a lack of listening to you?

WHY LISTEN?

MY DEAR ONES, TAKE NOTE OF THIS:
EVERYONE SHOULD BE QUICK TO
LISTEN, SLOW TO SPEAK, AND SLOW
TO BECOME ANGRY. JAMES 1:19



When someone we value and trust listens to us, we feel valued and trusted ourselves.

We also experience nurture.

Someone who listens closely and with deep interest offers comfort, encouragement, and hope.

Listening also marks a life of faithfulness among those called to follow Jesus and who base their lives on the teachings and examples he offers.

In numerous places throughout the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life, he draws on the teachings of the ancient Hebrew prophets and reminds "**anyone with ears to hear, listen.**" (Mark 4:9, 23; 8:18; Luke 8:8, 14:35).

To listen closely, and in so doing to learn and to be transformed for new ways of life and new kinds of relationships. Active and disciplined listening lies at the heart of meaningful relationships.

Requirements & Commitments for listening well



Remember, faithful listening has less to do with techniques and more to do with ways of being in the presence of another – a posture of listening.

Five Commitments & The Listener's...

Intention

Attention

Silence

Conversation

Reflection

Five Commitments for Listening Well: INTENTION



Faithful listening requires intention —one must intend to listen.

To be intentional means to have motivation, interest, purpose, and resolve regarding listening.

These qualities follow from desire to listen, to holding listening up as a worthy goal, and to pursue this goal. Without intending to listen, one cannot listen well.

Five Commitments for Listening Well: ATTENTION



Faithful listening also requires sustained attention given to another.

Attention calls for one's keen focus and priority on the speaker. We don't lead with our own stories. – unless asked.

“I can only imagine how difficult this is for you.”

“I wish you didn't have to experience this.”

“It's not supposed to happen this way, is it?”

“Life is really difficult, and you are in a lot of pain.”

“You are really courageous to be so honest about how you're feeling.”

Five Commitments for Listening Well: SILENCE



Offering silence is offering a gift.

“Silence provides space for the speaker to do nonverbal work.

It allows for attending to the voice of God as well as to internal voices that may have something to add to what has been said.

It is a space for reflection on what has taken place, for reception of new insights, and assimilation of what has been revealed.

Silence is not empty, not an absence, but an activity.”

Emma Justes

Five Commitments for Listening Well: CONVERSATION



Faithful listening requires the ability to deepen and sustain what the speaker may share. This deepening and sustaining occurs through conversation.

Ask Open Questions: These questions begin with How, What, When, Where, and Who.

Avoid Closed Questions: These questions begin with Did, Will, Is, Are, Can, Should, Would, and Could. Closed questions allow for single-word responses like Yes or No that may preempt further conversation or listening.

Say: Tell me more. Help me understand more about... It sounds like... What I'm hearing you say is... So let me make sure I've understood (paraphrasing what has been shared)...

Five Commitments for Listening Well: REFLECTION



Reflection involves distilling what has occurred in a listening moment.

No reflection should involve saying to the speaker, “I know what’s best for you”; “You should do such and such”; or “That’s exactly what happened to me, so try this solution.”

Rather, this reflection invites the speaker to engage in further self-reflection and, perhaps, in additional conversations (with the present speaker or another) going forward.

Phrases can include: “My sense is that . . .” “I’m wondering if . . .” “I have a hunch that . . .” “It occurs to me that . . .” “What I’m not clear about . . .” “What if you considered . . .” “Imagine proceeding in this way ..”

**UPCOMING
TRAININGS
&
BUILDING
OUR
PASTORAL
SKILLS**

Christ's Healing
Church

Deacon Labyrinth
Walk

Wholeness &
Healing

The Basics of
Prayer

Death, Dying &
Grief

Pastoral Care &
LGBTQ+
Members

Visitation &
Being the
Presence of
Christ

Pastoral Care &
the Life Cycle

Loss Related
to Aging

WHAT'S NEXT

Antiracism Training with the Session #1 of 4

Thursday Nov 18, 2021 ~ 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Contact Sarah Finbow sfinbow@nassauchurch.org

Advent Service of Remembrance

Sunday Dec 12, 2021 ~ 2:00 – 3:00 PM ~ Chapel

Christmas Poinsettia Delivery

Sunday Dec 19, 2021, ~ pickup at after worship outside office

January Meeting & Training

Tuesday Jan 4, 2022, ~ 7:00 – 8:00 PM via Zoom

February Meeting & Mental Health First Aid Training Part 1

Tuesday Feb 6, 2022 ~ 7:00 – 8:00 PM via Zoom

February Meeting & Mental Health First Aid Training Part 2

Tuesday Feb 6, 2022 ~ 7:00 – 8:00 PM via Zoom

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW: FOR THE DEACONS

Go to our Website:

www.nassauchurch.org

Congregational Life / Deacons & Pastoral Care /

For the Deacons

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW: MY NASSAU

Go to our Website: www.nassauchurch.org

Click My Nassau tab, upper right

Click Sign In / Click Need a Login

Proceed to Account Sign up

ADAPTED FROM ALLAN HUGH
COLE JR.
AUSTIN PRESBYTERIAN
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
AUSTIN, TEXAS



ENDNOTES

1. This exercise is adapted from Allen E. Ivey, Norma B. Gluckstern, and Mary Bradford Ivey, *Basic Attending Skills* (Microtraining Associates, 1982). 2. Donald Capps, *Giving Counsel: A Minister's Guidebook* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 12. 3. I have written about commitments previously as they relate to the practice of prayer. See Allan Hugh Cole Jr., *The Life of Prayer: Mind, Body, and Soul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), especially pp. 67–69. 4. Heinz Kohut, *How Does Analysis Cure?* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 82. 5. Emma J. Justes, *Hearing Beyond the Words: How to Become a Listening Pastor* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 59. 6. Sarah A. Butler, *Caring Ministry: A Contemplative Approach to Pastoral Care* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 24. 7. Cole, *The Life of Prayer*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 69.