



# grow. pray. serve.

Reveille UMC Weekly Guide

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August 3-9, 2020

**Sermon by Lead Pastor Pete Moon**

**Sermon Title: “On Being a Good Listener”**

Notes from sermon on 8/2:

Things to Pray For This Week:

**Family Focus Question:**

**Our minds naturally drift when we are in worship.**

**How do we get our focus back during that time so that we might hear a word from God?**

**Questions for Small Groups**

- 1. Paul says that faith comes by hearing (verse 17). What does “hearing” mean today with so many means of communication? Is the classic understanding of “hearing” still such a big deal?**
- 2. Paul speaks of the importance of preaching but also speaks to the critical nature of listening to the word preached. How do we do that? How do we listen well when the word is preached to us?**
- 3. Listening in general is hard today. There are distractions but there is also bias. We easily hear what we want to hear. How do we remove ourselves from that to hear a fresh or even prophetic word that we may need to hear?**

**Monday, August 3: Read Romans 10:5-15**

This week we will be challenged to do something that doesn't come naturally to many of us, especially today. We will be asked to *listen*, and listen carefully. We will read scriptures like the one today that are deeper and more dense than many (though we can almost always expect that from Romans!), and some that are almost annoyingly straightforward and impossible to ignore. We will also be asked to resist our natural tendency to drift toward self-focused interpretations and quests to get to the next thing, and truly listen to what God is saying to us.

In today's passage, Paul speaks of the power and priority of preaching but often dismissed in this familiar text is the key spiritual priority of listening when we are in the pews and in other spiritual centers. How can we use today's scripture to not only preach the gospel to others, but better listen to it when it's preached to us?

**Tuesday, August 4: Read Deuteronomy 11:18-21**

The commandment to “Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads” has been taken quite literally by observant and Orthodox Jews for thousands of years, wearing Tefillin or Phylacteries consisting of two small black leather boxes containing scripture – one on the forearm and one on the forehead. While this degree of observance may seem strange and extreme to us, we do understand the power of wearing something that can trigger a desired behavior, such as a string tied around a finger for memory or a rubber band worn at the wrist that can be snapped.

Could we be doing something to help remind us to slow down and listen to God? One Reville member keeps a smooth stone distributed at a Reville baptismal service in his car, which he holds during his morning commute to remind him to pray. Another has the YouVersion Bible App right next to her text icon on her phone. Yet another’s prompt to be a better listener during Zoom meetings is a sticky note next to her computer monitor with the acronym “WAIT” which means “Why Am I Talking?” What practice can you implement today that will help you slow down, listen, read scripture, and pray?

**Wednesday, August 5: Read James 1:19-25**

Listening requires more than just hearing...it requires a response. As the writer of James says in today’s passage, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” Unlike some passages in, say, Romans, this one is pretty darn straightforward. We aren’t really listening to God unless we are subsequently changing our behavior. When have you heard God recently, but didn’t really listen? What have you known for a long time you should be doing, but are resisting? Instead of turning away from the voice of God in this matter, how could you keep it right in front of you?

**Thursday, August 6: Read Matthew 7:24-29**

When we truly listen to God and respond, we gain a foundation upon which we can build our values, priorities, and plans. Even when circumstances change, we will not feel foolish or regretful, nor tempted to abandon everything and take the easy way out. We can all remember times when we did not heed good advice and found ourselves on shaky ground, just like the foolish man who built his house on sand. Today, think back on a time when this happened to you, then another time when you did listen and found yourself standing on solid rock. Share these stories with loved ones tonight.

**Friday, August 7: Read Matthew 4:1-4**

While most of us have a problem with listening to others, an even bigger problem for almost all of us is listening to the wrong people. We surround ourselves with voices that do not challenge our beliefs but rather serve as echo chambers. We allow algorithms and advertising agencies to be the loudest voices telling us what to buy, wear, watch, and hear. We feed on sound bites and scandal, not scripture, and we end up feeling isolated, depressed, and empty. What voices can we turn off today – or at least turn significantly down – so we can more fully and peacefully and joyfully feed on the voice of God? How would creating this holy quiet help us more easily listen to sermons, more often feast on scripture, more readily respond to God’s word, more sustainably underline our decisions, and more reliably give us love, joy, and peace?

**Saturday, August 8: Scripture Memorization: Matthew 4:4b**

“Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

**Sunday, August 9: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship in praying our Prayer of**

**Common Confession:** *Lord you have said today that faith comes by hearing but I don’t listen well. I am distracted and often hear only what I desire to hear. By your grace, speak a fresh word to me that would dismiss the distractions and my mold my desires to yours. Do not let me miss the hope that comes from your word, for we ask it in the name of Christ.*