

Listening to Abba Father

Listening is one of the quiet disciplines of the Christian life, often overlooked in a world that prizes activity, opinion, and constant noise. Yet throughout Scripture, we see that the people who walked most closely with God were those who learned to listen attentively to His voice. For us at Runnymede Christian Fellowship, learning to listen to our heavenly Father is not an abstract idea but a daily invitation into relationship, trust, and obedience.

From the opening pages of the Bible, God is revealed as One who speaks. Creation itself comes into being through His word, and humanity is formed to live in responsive fellowship with Him. The tragedy of the fall in Genesis is not only disobedience but a turning away from God's voice toward other voices. Ever since, the journey of faith has involved relearning how to hear Him clearly amid competing distractions.

Jesus emphasises this posture when He says, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). Notice the order: listening comes before following. We cannot walk in step with the Lord if we have not first cultivated ears that are tuned to Him. In a culture saturated with information, notifications, and urgent demands, intentional listening becomes an act of spiritual resistance, a declaration that God's voice matters most.

Listening to our heavenly Father begins with Scripture. The Bible is not merely a historical record or theological resource; it is the living word through which God continues to speak. As Paul reminds Timothy, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). When we open the Scriptures prayerfully, we place ourselves in a posture where the Spirit can illuminate truth, convict gently, and guide wisely.

Yet listening is more than reading words on a page. It involves quieting our hearts before God. The psalmist writes, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). Stillness is not always easy, particularly when life is full of responsibilities, concerns, and legitimate pressures. But in the stillness we learn to recognise the subtle promptings of the Spirit, the inner assurance of God's presence, and the peace that accompanies His guidance.

We see a beautiful example in the young Samuel, who responded to God's call with the simple prayer, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10). That posture remains a model for us today. Listening requires humility, a willingness to set aside our assumptions and agendas, and a readiness to respond when God speaks. It is not passive; it is an active attentiveness rooted in trust.

In my own experience, both in seasons of leadership and in quieter moments of reflection, I have found that God often speaks in ways that are gentle rather than

dramatic. Sometimes it is a Scripture that comes alive, sometimes a persistent nudge toward compassion, sometimes a deep sense of conviction about a decision. Like Elijah discovering that the Lord was not in the wind, earthquake, or fire but in a “gentle whisper” (1 Kings 19:12), we learn that God’s voice is often discerned in quiet attentiveness.

Listening also happens in community. God frequently speaks through the encouragement, wisdom, and even the loving challenge of fellow believers. As we gather, pray, and share together, we create space for mutual discernment. This is one of the great gifts of fellowship: we help one another hear more clearly.

There is also a practical dimension. When we sense God prompting us, obedience deepens our capacity to hear Him again. Jesus teaches that those who are faithful in little will be entrusted with more (Luke 16:10). Each step of obedience sharpens our spiritual hearing and builds confidence in His guidance.

At its heart, listening to our heavenly Father is about relationship. He is not distant or reluctant to communicate; He delights in making His ways known to His children. As James encourages us, “Come near to God and he will come near to you” (James 4:8). When we draw near with open hearts, we discover that He has been speaking all along.

May we, as a fellowship, cultivate lives marked by attentive listening, trusting that the One who calls us is faithful, wise, and full of grace.

Questions

1. In what practical ways can you cultivate a lifestyle that helps you recognise and respond to the voice of Jesus amid daily distractions? (**John 10:27**)
2. What does stillness look like in your current season of life, and how might creating space for quiet help you listen more attentively to God? (**Psalms 46:10**)
3. What attitudes of humility and openness are needed to sincerely pray “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening,” and what might God be inviting you to hear? (**1 Samuel 3:10**)
4. How can you discern God’s gentle promptings, and what helps you distinguish His voice from your own thoughts or external pressures? (**1 Kings 19:12**)
5. What intentional steps can you take this week to draw nearer to God and grow in your ability to listen to Him? (**James 4:8**)