

God speaks to his people.

(Listening and Hearing)

All references are from the New Living Translation (NLT)

- True Christianity is not learning a set of rules and regulations that you follow to keep God happy.
- True Christianity is an intimate relationship with a God who communicates with his people.

He spoke with Adam, Eve, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Isaiah, Jonah, Paul, Peter, John, Phillip, Ananias.....

..... and he can speak to you.

- To listen to God and to obey him is the heart of our faith
- To recognise his voice is your privilege as a child of God
- To develop the trust to believe what He says *and* to find the courage to do what He asks you to do, this is maturity in God

Our Living Free prayer teams have been listening to God for you during your prayer sessions, but they are not specially selected, super elite Christians who can hear God's voice.

In Christ we can all hear God through the Holy Spirit.

John 10:3-5

³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

⁴After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice.

⁵They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice."

John 16:13-15

¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.

¹⁴He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me.

¹⁵All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.'

Listening to God, recognising his voice & obeying him is normal Christian living.

1. Developing a lifestyle of hearing God's voice

Question:

How important is it to you that you hear God's voice – regularly, intentionally, consistently?

John 15:4-8

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

⁵"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me, you can do nothing.

⁶Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch, and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned.

⁷But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted!

⁸When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

- If you decide His voice is important you can make a commitment to prioritise developing intimacy with Him.
- You can make up your mind – God is my number 1 priority.

Mark 1:35

Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray.

The start of 2016 is a great time to reflect on your relationship with God.

It is a great time to put some habits and routines in place that will strengthen your walk with Jesus.

Some suggestions:

- Determine a place
- Set a time
- Choose activities

Many of us fall into the trap of allowing our lives to be dominated by busyness and distractions.

Busyness (or worldliness) is getting caught up with societies, other people's agendas, objectives and activities - to the neglect of walking with God.

Distractions can be endless – TV, phone, internet, people, chores

etc.

etc.

etc.

etc.

etc.

Exercise

Ask God to reveal to you in this moment, specifically, where you are too 'busy' or 'distracted'.

2. How do we hear God's voice?

Here are some examples, there are more!

a) Conviction from the Holy Spirit

b) In the imagination

- i. Pictures
- ii. Dreams

c) Through other people

- i. Prophetic words
- ii. Talks and preaches
- iii. Friends

d) From His word – the bible

- i. As you read it
- ii. Later, as the Holy Spirit helps you recall what you have read

Exercise:

Ask God questions...

1. How can I bear fruit for your kingdom?
2. How can I love/bless/serve my wife/husband/children/family?
3. What do you want me to do with my/our money?
4. How can I serve at church?
5. Who can I serve at church?
6. Is there any offensive way in me?
7. How can I grow more in you?
8. What do you like God?

3. What stops us from hearing God's voice?

- **Unbelief**

I don't believe God is going to speak to me

I don't believe that I can hear God's voice

- **Fear**

I am anxious I'll get it wrong

I'm worried about what other people will think of me

- **Insignificance**

I'm not really needed in this church/prayer meeting/team

What I've heard won't be taken seriously

- **Pride**

I can hear God better than that person

I don't need to do it that way

- **Cynicism**

It's unlikely that God speaks as people think he does

I think people are getting carried away hearing from God, he's already spoken in His word; this is over the top

Exercise:

Ask God to reveal any of these strongholds in you and go through the process of repenting and replacing.

4. What should we do when we hear God's voice?

The importance of discernment

Is this prompting/word/wisdom etc. from God?

Eve and David were both prompted.

- a) Is what I'm hearing consistent with scripture?
- b) Is what I'm hearing consistent with the life and character of Christ?
- c) Does what I'm hearing resonate with other believers?
(when a word is shared, often it will resonate with people's hearts/spirits)

When we are planning to hear God's voice we can pray to bind the devil and our flesh and ask the Holy Spirit to come.

The importance of obedience

When we know we have heard from God our next step is to obey his commands.

For example:

Acts 9 – Ananias

Jonah chapters 1-3

Exercise:

Quick reference check.....some things Jesus said, how's your obedience?

- Don't store up treasures on earth
- Stop judging others
- Don't worry about tomorrow
- Love your enemies
- Give your gifts in secret
- Don't look lustfully at a women
- Be reconciled with people who have something against you
- Don't resist an evil person, if you're slapped on the right cheek turn the other too

Questions for reflection

1. Is hearing from God a priority to you?
What routines/habits have you established that enable you to hear Him?

2. What keeps you busy or distracted from God?

3. Can you give an example of when God has spoken to you?
 - a. Through a picture
 - b. Through a person
 - c. Through the bible

4. Have you ever made any life changing decisions based on a word from God?

5. Do fear, insignificance, pride, unbelief or cynicism stop you hearing from God?

6. What are some of your reflections on discernment and obedience?

7. Ask God: What do you like? – listen to his answer.