

This month, the first group meeting will focus on the Reflection Questions, Quotes, and Meta. The second meeting will focus FOR FURTHER REFLECTION.

Reflect on DEEP LISTENING

- What if prayer is really about listening until you hear a voice that says “[You are beloved](#)”?
- Instead of arguing with them, what if next time you asked “[Will you tell me your story](#)? I’d love to know how you came to this point of view.”
- Who listened to you when you most needed it? Who first gave you the gift of deep listening?
- Are you having trouble hearing beyond the voice of your wounds?

DEEP LISTENING Quotes

- “Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you'd have preferred to talk.” - Doug Larson
- “First learn to listen / Not only for enemies around / Corners in hidden places / But for the faint footsteps / Of hope and the whispers of resistance...” -Rev. Sean Parker Denison
- “Listen with your eyes, as if the story you are hearing is happening right now. Listen without blinking, as if a move might frighten the truth away forever...Your whole life might depend on what you hear.” – Joyce Sutphen

META REFLECTION – Small group ministry such as this one, discourages cross talk as a way to help participants move from active listening to deep listening, not only of others, but of one’s self. How have you experienced our practice of deep listening and how has it helped or hindered your ability to reflect on the theme?

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

A Deep Listening Exercise – 4’33” (four minutes, thirty-three seconds) by John Cage

4’33” is a famous piece of avant garde music composed by John Cage and first performed in the summer of 1952 by pianist David Tudor in Woodstock, NY at a concert to benefit the Artists Welfare Fund, to an audience supportive of contemporary art. It caused immediate scandal. People walked out of the performance.

Listen to and watch a performance of 4’33” here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTEFKFiXSx4>
If you want to get really brave, download the piece from iTunes or another mp3 service and just listen to it.

AFTER (and ONLY after) listening to the piece *the entire way through*, learn more about it here:

NPR segment on occasion of John Cage’s 100th birthday: <https://www.npr.org/2000/05/08/1073885/4-33>
Song Facts on 4’33” <https://www.songfacts.com/facts/john-cage/433>

Prepare a reflection on this to share. Think about: What was your initial reaction to this? Is 4’33” music? What does it require of the listener? As art, does it enable reflection on the deeper meaning of music and silence, or does it come across as a joke? Why? Note that the piece has “movements” and the opening and closing of the keyboard and turning the pages of the score are part of the instructions on how to perform the piece. How did these performance markers help you or hinder you in experiencing the piece?