



LIVING THE MISSION PRAYER

AWAKEN RISK BLESS

LISTEN TO THE VOICES

“Perhaps one of the most precious and powerful gifts we can give another person is to really listen to them, to listen with quiet, fascinated attention, with our whole being, fully present.”

—Kay Lindahl, *The Sacred Art of Listening: Forty Reflections for Cultivating a Spiritual Practice* (Kindle Locations 95–96). Kindle Edition

PURPOSE

Deep listening is difficult. As a result, our listening is often on the surface. We are distracted by our own ideas and ways to fix people or situations. Our response either frees or limits deeper sharing and understanding. Listening requires intentional action. To listen, to truly listen, is to attend to, to take in, to receive, to pay attention and to be fully present. To listen is to become fully awake to all the voices seeking to be heard and understood in a separated and suffering world.

This practice is about paying attention to the voices in our communities and discerning how we shall live in response to those voices.

Doctrine and Covenants 163:4 invites us to the practice of deep listening as the first step in shaping a relevant response to physical, spiritual, and environmental suffering.

4 a. God, the Eternal Creator, weeps for the poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased of the world because of their unnecessary suffering. Such conditions are not God’s will. Open your ears to hear the pleading of mothers and fathers in all nations who desperately seek a future of hope for their children. Do not turn away from them. For in their welfare resides your welfare.

b. The earth, lovingly created as an environment for life to flourish, shudders in distress because creation’s natural and living systems are becoming exhausted from carrying the burden of human greed and conflict. Humankind must awaken from its illusion of independence and unrestrained consumption without lasting consequences.

SUGGESTED STEPS

1. Create Daily Entry Points for Conversation

Begin each day with a few moments of reflection as you consider the following question:

With whom is the Spirit leading me to be in conversation today?

You may find the Mission Prayer helpful to begin this reflection. Specifically focus on “Where will your spirit lead today?” What voices are you being led to seek out that need to be heard and that you need to hear? You may also consider reading the newspaper as a way to listen to the voices in your community. Look at the neighborhood section of your local paper and prayerfully consider opportunities to hear new voices.

Consider conversations and relationships that you have not encountered in local nonprofits, faith groups, local government, and persons you may encounter in third places (public places of gathering).

Simply begin a conversation and let others know you are interested in learning about their story. Ask questions to clarify understanding and explore areas you are interested in understanding more deeply.

Deep listening sometimes surprises people. If someone asks why you are engaging them in conversation, simply share your desire to better understand the many voices in your neighborhood. Share your desire to get to know them better.

2. Reflect on Experiences.

Two questions will inevitably arise as we pay attention to the voices in our neighborhoods and communities:

- What am I learning from these conversations?
- How might the Spirit be inviting me to respond?

How can you as a disciple or Christ-centered community respond to what you have heard from your conversation partner? What action can you take in the next 30 days to respond to what you have heard? As you respond, what are you learning, and how are you being shaped as a disciple to continue to respond?

Consider sharing your experiences and thoughts about response with a spiritual companion, friend, or your congregation or small group.