

REAL Relationships – Part 4

Pastor Rick - 2/28/21

Icebreaker: How did the family you grew up in speak to one another?

The Purpose: To listen at a heart level with empathy, attuned to the words and nonverbal communication of another person (i.e., so that the other person feels felt by you).

Scripture: Matthew 22:37-39; 1 Corinthians 13:1-8,13; John 1:1-3,14

Discuss:

1. What obstacles, difficulties, or successes did you experience in meeting with God this past week?
2. Share a time when you felt listened to. What did the other person do that caused you to feel heard?
3. God entered our planet and forever changed it. God became incarnate, taking on human flesh. He knew there was no better way to show human beings his love than by fully entering our lives. Jesus modeled incarnational love when he entered our world. Read aloud John 1:1-3,14.
 - Step into Jesus' shoes. What feelings might he have experienced in leaving heaven and entering a world so different from heaven?
 - Describe a time when you left your "world" and entered one very different from your own.
4. Jesus serves as a beautiful model of listening:
 - He left his world. (When we listen, we leave our world).
 - He entered our world. (We enter another's world through listening.)
 - He held onto himself. (When we listen, we don't have to agree.)
 - Jesus hung between two worlds. (I may not like what I hear, but I can hang between the tension of our different perspectives.)

Name one or two obstacles you will need to overcome to grow into a person who listens well.

Application:

1. Review the steps to listening well:
 - Give the speaker you full attention. Don't think about your rebuttal.
 - Step into the speaker's shoes – feel what he/she is feeling.
 - Avoid judging or interpreting.
 - Reflect back as accurately as you can what you heard the speaker say.
 - Ask, Is there more? When you think he/she is done.
 - Finally, ask "Of everything you share, what is the most important thing you want me to remember?"
2. Practice incarnational listening with one other person this week. Ask "What is the biggest thing in your life that is impacting you right now? How are you feeling about it?"
3. Continue spending time alone with God in silence. Consider setting a group goal and check in with one another next week (agree to spend ___ number of minutes in silence with God daily).

Close in prayer: Lord, teach me by the Holy Spirit to listen deeply to the people I am with today, to see them as you see them, and to love them as you love them. In Jesus' name, Amen.