

Hearing God

7 Steps to Hearing God's Voice

This session reflects on 7 simple steps we can take to hearing God's voice. We see in the testimony of Scripture that God is a communicative God who loves to speak to His people. These are some powerful examples of God's promises to speak and guide His people- Ps 32:8-9; Jer 33:3; Isa 30:21.

Richard Foster describes it like a TV. When the picture is not coming through, we don't assume waves are not being telecast, we assume it could be the reception. Similarly, when we don't hear from God, let's not assume He is not speaking to us, take time to adjust the antenna.

Step 1. Surrendering/Stillness

Psalm 46:10

- It is important where possible to find the right environment and have the right posture before God when seeking to hear His voice. Being mindful of our own assumptions and biases as well as taking time to still our own hearts and minds will make our listening more conducive.

Step 2. Asking

- We can ask God questions that are general or specific to situations we or others might be going through.
- The biblical example of David in battle is a classic one- 2 Sam 5:18-25. David faces a similar situation in two separate battles, but in the asking, God guides him differently in each situation.
- Asking God can be something deeply personal for yourself or for the sake of others whom you might be praying for.
- Be prepared by having access to a bible, some paper and a pen to note down what God might reveal to you. Be ready and expectant to receive something from God.

Step 3. Waiting/Listening

- It's important when waiting or listening to God to be attentive to the different ways that God might speak to us.

The 5 CS's from Alpha are a very helpful summary:

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- **Commanding Scripture:** God speaks primarily through the Bible.
- **Compelling Spirit:** God speaks through the guidance and prompting of the Holy Spirit.
- **Counsel Saints:** God sometimes speaks through other believers via their wisdom, discerning and input.
- **Circumstantial Signs:** Sometimes God will use circumstantial signs to speak or reveal things to His people.
- **Common Sense:** Sometimes God will speak to us through common sense, using our wisdom or thoughts to guide us.

Step 4. Record

- When we hear or receive something we sense might be from God, write it down. The following scriptures highlight the importance of noting down what God is saying- (Hab 2:2; Isa 8:1; Rev 1:19).
- Recording helps us remember what has been revealed; test what it is we might be hearing; reflect and meditate on it; and share with others what God might be saying.

Step 5. Testing

- The testing phase is one of the most important stages of hearing God. The Bible encourages us regularly to test and discern God's will- Here are two examples: Rom 12:1-2; 1 Thess 5:20-21.
- Rev Dr Barry Chant summarises the 5 B's as a way of testing whether something we hear is from God or not.

The 5B's of Testing God's voice

- **Biblical-** Is what we have heard aligned with the truth of Scripture?
- **Beneficial-** Is it of benefit to the person hearing or receiving the word? Does it build them up? 1 Cor 14:3.
- **Botanical-** Does following this lead to growing the fruit of the Spirit in that persons life? Gal 5:22.
- **Buddy tested-** Are there loving believers who can discern with you whether this is from God or not? Prov 11:14
- **Bona Fide-** If it is a 'fore-telling' one classic test is: "Did it happen?". This is the old testament method of testing a prophet or a prophecy.

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Step 6. Sharing

- Take time to pray and discern whether to share it with others.
- Three questions one needs to consider is: **Who** do I share it with?
When should I share it? **How** should I share it?

Who- Should I share it with someone? If so, who? Or is it just for me to pray about?

When should I share it? Right now or at a later time?

How do I share it? Humility is so important when sharing with someone.

- Sharing is important because it enables accountability and feedback to test whether we are on the right track.

Step 7. Reflecting

- Lastly, take time to reflect on whether what you shared was accurate. If so what can be learnt from this experience.
If not, what might need to be different next time you discern God's voice. How might the antenna need to be adjusted?
This is a very important step to growing in hearing God more clearly.

Q- What do I do if someone gives me a word from God?

A- Test what has been shared by using the 5 B's.

- Take time to reflect if it sits well or speaks directly to your situation.
- Pray about it and seek God's guidance about how to respond.
- Take your time to test the word, it doesn't need to be rushed.
- If it doesn't relate to you, make a note of it and "put it on the shelf".
- If it does relate, let the person know so to encourage them.

Q- What do I do if I have a word for someone else?

A- Record down what sense God is saying to you.

- Test and confirm whether you sense it might from God (Use the 5B's)
- If so, share it with the other person in humility and encourage them to test and discern this (Refer to the **share** step).
- Ask the other person whether it resonates with them or not.
- Take time to reflect on what you can learn from this.
- Note: Sometimes it may be necessary to ask another person to test it with you before sharing it.