

Fellowship Circle Resources - Topics: The Art of Listening

Opening Words & Chalice Lighting

"How Do I Listen to others? As if everyone were my Master Speaking to me Her Cherished Last Words."

--14th century Persian poet Hafiz (adapted)

Check-in

Focus: The Art of Listening

"When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving advice, you have not done what I asked. When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way, you are trampling on my feelings. When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problem. you have failed me, strange as that may seem. Listen! All I asked was that you listen, not talk or do --just hear me. Advice is cheap. 10 cents will get you both Dear Abby and Billy Graham in the same newspaper. And I can do for myself. I'm not helpless. Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless. When you do something for me that I can do for myself, you contribute to my fear and inadequacy. But when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel, no matter how irrational, then I can quit trying to convince you and can get about the business of understanding what's behind this irrational feeling. And when that's clear, the answers are obvious and I don't need advice. Irrational feelings make sense when we understand what's behind them. Perhaps that's why prayer works, sometimes, for some people -- because God is mute and he/she doesn't give advice or try to fix things. "They" just listen and let you work it out for yourself. So please listen and just hear me. And, if you want to talk, wait a minute for your turn, and I'll listen to you." --Ralph Roughton Questions: - Has anyone ever felt like that? When? -Has anyone ever felt like the person being written about? When? -Why do you think it is so hard to simply listen? -Who was the best listener you have ever known?

-What can we do in this group to improve the quality of our listening?

Note: you don't have to ask all of the questions, nor do you have to limit yourself to these examples.

Check-Out: likes and wishes

Closing Reading

"Express yourself completely, then keep quiet. Be like the forces of nature: when it blows, there is only wind; when it rains, there is only rain; when the clouds pass, the sun shines through."

--Tao Te Ching, chapter 23

OR

"Everyone is God speaking. Why not be polite and listen?"

--Hafiz, adapted