

HEARING FROM GOD

Being close to God means communicating with him, which is almost always a two-way street. In our ongoing friendship with God, we tell him what is on our hearts in prayer and learn to perceive what he is saying to us. It's this second part of our conversation with God that many find to be so difficult or even unapproachable. How can you be sure God is speaking to you? The answer is that we learn by experience. The key is to focus more on building our personal relationship with our Creator and less on individual actions and decisions.



WHEN YOU MEET:

Corresponds with the sermon from Sunday 4 May

Connect:

- Spend some time greeting and welcoming each other.
- This term, we are starting to move into the 'how' of hearing God's voice.
- It's important to acknowledge that 'hearing from God' can be difficult because we all come with different histories and experiences.

Pause & Pray:

Take a few minutes to pause and clear your mind, letting go of what may be filling your heart and mind. Share with God what's going on for you at this moment. Allow Him to remind you that you are at home in Him and His immense love for you. He doesn't need anything else from you right now – just your stillness. Pray, asking God to speak to each person through the time together as we reflect on God's word.

Summary:

"Discernment is not a maze God puts us in or a puzzle for us to solve. It's a gift of the Spirit allowing us to be led by the Good Shepherd who knows and loves us." (Tyler Staton)

This week we're using a resource from part of Pete Greig's '27/7 Prayer Course'. We'll watch a video where he unpacks the practical ways we can tune into hearing and discerning God's voice and then we'll follow the discussion questions from the course.

Read & re-read the passage:

In the video, Pete references 1 Samuel 3:1-10. Read this together before you start. You may like to read it from 2 different versions.

From the reading, what stood out to you? Be encouraged that God may be speaking to you through His Word – the Scriptures.

MORE RESOURCES: PODCASTS

- 'Ruthless Elimination of Hurry' – John Mark Comer
- 'How to Pray' + 'How to Hear God' – Pete Greig
- 'Beholding' – Strahan Coleman



Watch the video:

The Prayer Course – Listening (20min video):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laHA1yj8E2g>



Questions:

1. What did you find most helpful or most challenging in the video?
2. Do you feel like your connection to God's voice is like "wi-fi", "cell phone" or "snail mail"? Do you find it's obvious when God is speaking to you?
3. Pete mentioned that we all hear God differently: "It's okay to hear God the way He's made you." Do you experience hearing God's voice in a specific way? If so, how?
4. "Keep it simple, keep it real and keep it up." (Pete Greig) How can we, as a group, support one another in our journey to discern God's voice? How can we create a safe space to share our experiences and learn from each other?
5. Between now and the next time we meet, spend some unhurried time talking with God about how you can better:

a. "Slow down" – What practical actions could you take this week to make time for listening to God?

b. "Soften up" – How can we encourage one another to "keep our hearts soft" in the busyness of our daily lives?

Pause:

Spend a couple of minutes quietly reflecting on what resonates with you and what you will take into the week with you. If you are planning to reflect on question #5, when do you plan to do that?

Pray: Share prayer points and pray for one another.

Finish with this written prayer:

Jesus my Teacher, guide me along your way, and help me to piece together the jigsaw of life in your kingdom. When I make decisions, lead me to the heart of the matter, and when I face conflict, do not let my own panic drown out the still, small voice of your wisdom.

Amen

(Taken from "The Book of a Thousand Prayers" compiled by Angela Ashwin)

MAY MISSION MONTH:

Throughout May Mission Month, we encourage you to spend some time praying for our Mission Partners.

This fortnight, let's thank God for the **Sunshine Hostel** and **Muana & Villy**, who are loving, living and revealing Jesus throughout Thailand.

You can find more information about them and their prayer points in our Mission Partner Information Booklet. Download it [HERE](#) or on our webpage: grlc.org.au/mission



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WHEN YOU MEET:

No corresponding sermon for this topic

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Pause & Pray:

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Summary:

God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, Prayer, Circumstances, and the Church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.

Read & re-read the passage:

The Scriptures repeatedly show that God communicates with His people by different means. Read this selection of passages slowly:

- Psalm 19:1-4
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- Hebrews 1:1-2
- John 16:26-27
- Acts 13:2

From the reading, what stood out to you? Be encouraged that God may be speaking to you through His Word – the Scriptures.

MORE RESOURCES: PODCASTS

- 'Ruthless Elimination of Hurry' – John Mark Comer
- 'How to Pray' + 'How to Hear God' – Pete Greig
- 'Beholding' – Strahan Coleman





Questions:

1. Consider the ways in which God speaks (Holy Spirit, Bible, prayer, circumstances, others) and share if you have experienced God speaking in any of these ways. Which of these ways are more familiar to you and which ways are less familiar?
2. Before 'caller ID', many of us remember answering a phone call and recognising the voice on the other end before they had the chance to say their name – or they might even simply say, "Hey, it's me." How is it that you knew who it was without seeing their face or their name?
3. Reflect on a time when you felt God was speaking to you. How did you recognise it?
4. Are there recurring ways or circumstances in which you tend to hear God most clearly? Are there times or situations where it's more difficult?
5. Between now and the next time we meet, spend some unhurried time considering what practices and habits can help you cultivate a heart that is more receptive to God's voice. How can you incorporate one of these into your daily life? You could use the traffic light framework:

RED – what is something that you may need to **stop doing** that may be hindering you from recognising God's voice?

YELLOW – in what ways / areas can you **slow down** to better recognise God's voice?

GREEN – what is something that you could **start doing** to learn how to better recognise God's voice?

Pause:

Spend a couple of minutes quietly reflecting on what resonates with you and what you will take into the week with you. If you are planning to reflect on question #5, when do you plan to do that?

Pray: Share prayer points and pray for one another.

Finish with this written prayer:

*Lord,
let my life be a space
in which you can work in the world.
Clear away my inner rubbish,
and fill me with your Spirit
of healing, delight and peace,
so that everything I do
may be the fruit of your life in me.
Amen*

(Taken from "The Book of a Thousand Prayers" compiled by Angela Ashwin)

MAY MISSION MONTH:

Throughout May Mission Month, we encourage you to spend some time praying for our Mission Partners.

This fortnight, let's thank God for **David Cross with ZOE** and **Gus & Audrey**, who are loving, living and revealing Jesus throughout Australia, Thailand and Taiwan.

You can find more information about them and their prayer points in our Mission Partner Information Booklet. Download it [HERE](https://grlc.org.au/mission) or on our webpage: grlc.org.au/mission



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Being close to God means communicating with him, which is almost always a two-way street. In our ongoing friendship with God, we tell him what is on our hearts in prayer and learn to perceive what he is saying to us. It's this second part of our conversation with God that many find to be so difficult or even unapproachable. How can you be sure God is speaking to you? The answer is that we learn by experience. The key is to focus more on building our personal relationship with our Creator and less on individual actions and decisions.



WHEN YOU MEET:

Corresponds with the sermon from Sunday 1 June

Connect:

- Spend some time greeting and welcoming each other.
- This term, we are starting to move into the 'how' of hearing God's voice.
- It's important to acknowledge that 'hearing from God' can be difficult because we all come with different histories and experiences.

Pause & Pray:

Take a few minutes to pause and clear your mind, letting go of what may be filling your heart and mind. Share with God what's going on for you at this moment. Allow Him to remind you that you are at home in Him and His immense love for you. He doesn't need anything else from you right now – just your stillness. Pray, asking God to speak to each person through the time together as we reflect on God's word.

Summary:

God speaks by the Holy Spirit through His word, the Bible. The Bible has the power to help us see the world around us and tell a truer, better story that exposes lies and reveals the coming hope of life as it should be. And yet, the Bible can be a polarising topic because we all come to it with different histories and experiences.

Read & Reflect:

Read 2 Timothy 3:16 and Hebrews 4:12.

Share with each other your experience of hearing God through Scripture. This may even include times you have tried and felt that you've received nothing.

MORE RESOURCES: PODCASTS

- 'Ruthless Elimination of Hurry' – John Mark Comer
- 'How to Pray' + 'How to Hear God' – Pete Greig
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Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina (Lectio) means “divine reading” in Latin. It is a structured way of engaging with God through reading the Bible where we let go of our own agendas and open ourselves to what God is trying to say to us. Instead of just rushing through the Bible, Lectio is a way to slow down and let it really soak into our lives. It was originally practiced by monks who, while reading Scripture, noticed that at times individual words, phrases or verses seemed to leap off the page with a special personal importance.

There are many people who don't like structure and don't like to be told what to do. We get it! Some structures inhibit growth, while other structures support it. We believe that Lectio that supports growth as it's a practice that lets God's Word change and shape how we see and do our daily tasks. In this way, by focusing on what's important to God for you at this time, revealed in God's Word, we can find the grace to deal with distractions and the strength to live lives that honour Him in both our actions and our quiet moments. Let's practice together now.

Follow the Lectio process together:

1. **Pray:** Make yourself comfortable. Take a few deep breaths. Pray something like: “Here I am God, help me to hear from you”, or Brother Lawrence's prayer: “Here I am Lord, all devoted to you, make me according to your heart”.
2. **Read:** Have someone read the passage slowly and carefully: 2 Timothy 3:1-17. Stop for a moment. Take a few deep breaths. Have another person read the passage again, slowly and carefully. This may be from a different version.
3. **Reflect:** What sticks out to you? Perhaps it's a particular image, phrase, or single word. Let that be your focus, meditating on what might God be trying to show you through what stands out. Try not to get stuck in “study mode” and analyse the passage too much.
4. **Respond:** Respond to the text and to God. Ask God to show you what He wants you to take from it. This could lead you to offer thanks, ask forgiveness, or simply talk with God about what the passage brought to your heart. You might find it helpful to write something down in your phone or your journal. '
5. **Rest:** Rest with God. Be aware of God's presence with you. Listen for His voice. You might like to practice 2-3 minutes of silence. Don't worry if your mind wanders, just notice that and bring your attention back to Jesus selected.

Pray: Share prayer points and pray for one another.
Finish with this written prayer:

*Thank you, Lord, for the gift of the Scriptures
As I reflect on the Bible,
make me open to your wisdom,
receptive to your will
and courageous in my response;
in the love of Jesus,
Rabbi, Teacher, Friend
Amen*

(Taken from “The Book of a Thousand Prayers” compiled by Angela Ashwin)

MAY MISSION MONTH:

Throughout May Mission Month, we encourage you to spend some time praying for our Mission Partners.

This fortnight, let's thank God for **James Lane with FEAST** and **Baptist World Aid**, who are loving, living and revealing Jesus in South Western Sydney and throughout the world.

You can find more information about them and their prayer points in our Mission Partner Information Booklet. Download it [HERE](#) or on our webpage: grlc.org.au/mission



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WHEN YOU MEET:

Corresponds with the sermon from Sunday 15 June

Connect:

- Spend some time greeting and welcoming each other.
- This term, we are starting to move into the 'how' of hearing God's voice.
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Pause & Pray:

Take a few minutes to pause and clear your mind, letting go of what may be filling your heart and mind. Share with God what's going on for you at this moment. Allow Him to remind you that you are at home in Him and His immense love for you. He doesn't need anything else from you right now – just your stillness. Pray, asking God to speak to each person through the time together as we reflect on God's word.

Summary:

Hearing God through prayer comes through prioritising a loving relationship with God, meeting with Him in prayer through stolen moments throughout the day, as well as longer times of disciplined prayer. No one ever masters praying, so pray as you can, not as you 'should'.

Read & Reflect:

1. Where and when did Jesus typically pray? Read the following passages:

- Matthew 14:23 (solitude)
- Mark 1:35 (early morning)
- Luke 6:12-13 (before significant decisions)
- Matthew 26:36-46 (in times of sorrow)

What do these examples tell us about the importance of making prayer a priority, even in a busy life?

MORE RESOURCES: PODCASTS

- 'Ruthless Elimination of Hurry' – John Mark Comer
- 'How to Pray' + 'How to Hear God' – Pete Greig
- 'Beholding' – Strahan Coleman





Reflect:

2. What often comes to mind regarding hearing God through prayer is what's described as a small still voice. Invite the group to share any experience (or not) of hearing some sort of inner voice or prompt from God.
3. How can our times of focused prayer (with reference to Jesus' example in question 1) sharpen our ability to recognise God's voice in the ordinary moments of our day? In what ways might God speak to us through our daily experiences, interactions, or even challenges?
4. **Listening prayer activity:** This exercise is built on the theological truth that your body is the "temple of the Holy Spirit"; the Spirit of God has direct access to your mind and imagination. He can interject His thoughts into your thoughts and His desires into your desires. Learning to make space for this to happen, and to discern His voice from all the other voices in our head, is a key task of discipleship to Jesus. The exercise itself is very simple:

- (1) Find a quiet, distraction-free time and place, put away your phone, and get comfortable.
- (2) Take a few minutes to just breathe deeply, in and out. You may want to simply say "Father" or "Come, Holy Spirit" as you inhale each breath. Let yourself slow down.
- (3) When you're ready to begin, ask God to clear out of your mind and the air around you any voices that are not the voice of God.
- (4) Then, ask God to speak to you. This can be as simple as praying, "God, please speak to me." or "God, is there anything you want to say to me?"
- (5) Finally, open your mind and heart to God's Spirit and listen. What comes to mind may be:
 - A line or passage of Scripture
 - A word or phrase
 - A thought or feeling
 - A picture in your mind
 - A sequence of pictures that "play" like a short film in your imagination
 - A memory
 - Something you have recently thought about, read, heard or seen

Don't feel like you have to strain. Just wait quietly. Often, the very first thought that comes to mind is from God. Something may come, or it may not, either way is fine. Our job is just to listen, not to make God speak.

- (6) Discern. It's very important that you test everything you "hear" against Scripture and in community. Don't be afraid to check it against the Bible, talk to your pastor, or share it with other followers of Jesus. This is the practice of discernment, and it's something we do together.
- (7) Reflect and Rest. If something comes to mind, spend a little time reflecting on it, asking the Spirit to clarify in your mind the meaning of his word to you. Write it down so you can remember it and spend more time in reflection on it in the coming days. And if nothing comes to mind, that's okay. Our job is to listen, not make God speak. Just rest in trust in the Father's love for you in Christ and by the Spirit.

Our recommendation is that you do this exercise daily, but you might just want to practice it once or twice this week. The goal is to begin really listening deeply for God's voice in your life and learning to live off His words to you.

**Reflect:**

5. Between now and the next time we meet, spend some unhurried time considering what practical steps you can take to create space and quietness in your life to better hear God in prayer. Are there some specific practices like silence, journaling, or breath prayer that appeal to you to try? Check out the GRLC app under 'Discipleship Resource' for ideas.

Pause:

Spend a couple of minutes quietly reflecting on what resonates with you and what you will take into the week with you. If you are planning to reflect on question #5, when do you plan to do that?

Pray: Share prayer points and pray for one another.

Finish with this written prayer:

*Lord,
this moment is yours;
mine for you,
and yours for me.
I need you,
I cannot survive without you;
and yet I go on rushing through life
as if I could do everything in my own strength.
Forgive me.
I know
that you care for me at all times,
and that I am always in your hands;
but I still need to pause
and let my heart and spirit
be loved by you
into loving you again.
Amen*

(Taken from "The Book of a Thousand Prayers" compiled by Angela Ashwin)

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WHEN YOU MEET:

Corresponds with the sermon from Sunday 29 June

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Pause & Pray:

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Summary:

God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the everyday circumstances of our lives, through other people (especially the church) and through everyday circumstances and trials.

Read & re-read the passage:

Read this Scripture, slowly. You may like to read it more than once and from different versions:

- John 10:27-28

From the reading, what stood out to you? Be encouraged that God may be speaking to you through His Word – the Scriptures.

MORE RESOURCES: PODCASTS

- 'Ruthless Elimination of Hurry' – John Mark Comer
- 'How to Pray' + 'How to Hear God' – Pete Greig
- 'Beholding' – Strahan Coleman





Reflect:

1. How does the Bible portray God's involvement in the details of our lives?
Read Proverbs 16:9, Acts 17:28, Romans 8:28. How can we cultivate an awareness of God's presence in the midst of our daily routines and activities?
2. **Examen exercise:** Jesus said that His sheep know his voice (John 10). How can we grow in learning to hear God's voice? There are many tools that can help us, one is the practice of Examen (or Prayer of Examen). The Prayer of Examen is a form of prayer in which we take time with God to look back over our day, paying special attention to our felt closeness to God. Where did I feel the closest to God today, and where did I feel the furthest? The practice of the Examen has been used for centuries as a way of training oneself to stay tuned into God's presence. The exercise itself is very simple:
 - (1) **Awareness:** Spend a couple of minutes in quietness to be present with God.
 - (2) **Gratitude:** Become aware of what you have received during the day that was God's gift to you. And be thankful for those gifts.
 - (3) **Desire:** Ask God for what you deeply desire.
 - (4) **Review the day:** Walk through your day in your mind, remembering both the experiences of the day and your responses (thoughts and actions). Pay attention to where God was at work and speaking but you did not notice "in the moment". Was God trying to speak to you through another person, an interaction or conversation, a circumstance or challenge or through creation?
 - (5) **Forgiveness:** Ask for forgiveness and thank God for His grace as you repent of the faults and sins discerned. Seek healing concerning these things.
 - (6) **Amending and anticipating:** Prayerfully commit to moving forward, looking ahead to the next day. How will you notice and enjoy God? What will God's grace have for you in the day to come? Invite God into more of the day ahead. You might like to pray: *"Jesus, I invite you into my day tomorrow. Help me to be more aware of you. Guide my thoughts and footsteps and help me feel the joy of Your presence."*
 - (7) **Acknowledge:** Take a final moment of rest and awareness of how God has been with you in this time of Examen.
3. How might the practice of the Daily Examen help us to recognise God's voice in the everyday?
4. What benefits might come from regularly reviewing our days with God?
5. Between now and the next time we meet, spend some unhurried time working through Examen. Consider writing down your feelings, thoughts and responses during this time, and what you sense God may be speaking to you.

Pause:

Spend a couple of minutes quietly reflecting on what resonates with you and what you will take into the week with you. If you are planning to reflect on question #5, when do you plan to do that?



Pray: Share prayer points and pray for one another.
Finish with this written prayer:

*Lord,
I cannot fathom or hold you;
I can only ask you
to take hold of me.
I cannot grasp or contain you
in a formula or tradition;
I can only ask you to fill me with yourself,
and make me part
of the mystery of your presence
in the world.
Amen*

(Taken from "The Book of a Thousand Prayers" compiled by Angela Ashwin)