

## LISTENING PRAYER

"As you begin listening, remember that all of relationship with God starts and ends with God being good and loving. Imagine yourself as a child crawling up into the lap of your good Father, who loves you unconditionally. He wants nothing more than to be close to you and remind you of his love." - Gerald Griffin

Start by getting in a comfortable spot. Maybe close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to quiet yourself and acknowledge that God is with you. Maybe put on a little bit of quiet music.

- Ask, "Holy Spirit, is there anything you want to encourage me in right now?"
- Take 5 minutes and stop and listen.

During this time a Bible verse, thought, or a picture might come to mind. You may be unsure if it's from the Holy Spirit. Be open-handed with what you hear and test it by Scripture. You may not hear anything at all. That's okay. God may just want to be with you in the silence.

When you're finished listening, take some time to reflect:

1. Did you hear or sense God speaking to you? Was there a phrase, word, or picture that God pressed into your heart? (It's okay if He didn't. Being with God is enough.)
2. Does what you heard agree with what the Bible teaches? You can talk to a trusted Christian friend about what you heard – do they affirm what you heard?

3. What do you think what you heard meant? Can you connect it to what is currently happening in your life? (It's ok and normal if you can't. Sometimes God brings more clarity later, and sometimes we get to sit with Him in the mystery.)

Over the next week, try out the practice of listening prayer at least once for a few minutes. You can reflect with close people in your life about what this experience was like for you. As you engage in this practice, may you enjoy sitting in stillness with God, whatever you hear or don't hear, whatever you feel or don't feel. And may you come with an expectancy that God is eager to gently speak to you today.