

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening

Week 15: Our reading for this week is a psalm. Psalms are prayers that are usually sung, expressing every human emotion. What does this psalmist know about listening?

**Sing aloud to God our strength;
shout for joy to the God of Jacob.
Raise a song, sound the tambourine,
the sweet lyre with the harp.
Blow the trumpet at the new moon,
at the full moon, on our festal day.
I hear a voice I had not known:
"I relieved your shoulder of the burden;
your hands were freed from the
basket.
I am the Lord your God,
who brought you up out of the land of
Egypt.
Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.
But my people did not listen to my
voice;
Israel would not submit to me.
So I gave them over to their stubborn
hearts,
to follow their own counsels.
O that my people would listen to me,
that Israel would walk in my ways!
Then I would quickly subdue their
enemies,
and turn my hand against their foes.
I would feed you with the finest of the
wheat,
and with honey from the rock I would
satisfy you."**

Psalm 81.1-3, 5b-6, 10-14, 16

Sing and shout, the psalmist says. Make music for God. Why? The psalmist is so full of joy because God is our strength. God makes us strong. We want to sing out our joy! What would our music for God sound like?

Ages 3-6

God wails, "O that my people would listen to me!" We can hear that God really wants us to walk in God's ways. What are God's ways? How can we know? What can we do to listen to God?

Ages 6-9

O that my
people
would listen

The psalmist hears a voice she "had not known." The voice knows her, though, and takes away something heavy that she carried. Can this voice take away our burdens, too? What burdens do we need lifted?

Ages 9-12

If people listen, *then* God subdues enemies. Why does God wait for listening first? Does listening give God power to act? Does listening give God *space* to act?

Teenagers

Choose the reflective questions that suit your family:

Read the scripture.

Ask questions.

Listen to each other's answers.

Then pray the prayer together on page 2.

Listen Prayer

One person leads and everyone else responds (R.)

Lord, our God,

We praise you for the wisdom of your will that unfolds all around us. We desire to enter more profoundly into this mystery, to root ourselves firmly in your will, to listen ever more deeply to you.

R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

Teach us to listen closely to your Word—to the words on the page and the meaning they invoke, to the human author and to the divine, to the spaces between the letters where your Spirit dwells.



R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

Teach us to listen attentively to Creation—to the voice of the earth, to the whispering of wind and waves, to the silence of the rocks and soil and swarms of voiceless creatures.



R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

Teach us to listen respectfully to the culture that surrounds us—to its wisdom and its folly, to the loud voices and the quiet, to that which can teach us and form us and expand our thinking.



R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

And teach us, Lord, to listen deeply to one another—to what we speak aloud and to what we leave unsaid, to our needs and to our concerns, to the love and the longing and desires of our hearts.

**R. We come before you.
We make ourselves still.
We listen to understand.
Amen.**

