

EMBODIED LISTENING IN CONTEXT

Barriers: hearing loss, selective listening, & tone

Proximity: personal, social, digital, institutional

Roles: local listeners, chief listeners, narrators

Histories: social locations, cultures, traditions

Now: acoustics, (sound) systems, trauma, power

- GROUNDING OUR POSTURE**
- Humility
 - Mutuality
 - Curiosity
 - Courage

- WHAT TO EXPECT**
- Principles and practices
 - Stories of transformation
 - A theology of listening
 - Q & A

- TODAY'S OBJECTIVE**
- Consider listening through the lens of Scripture
 - To hear and respond to the five cries

TO BEGIN, WHY LISTEN?

STEPS TO CONSIDER

<p>HOST A GATHERING</p> <p>Dialogue with friends in your city</p>	<p>DIG DEEPER</p> <p>Resources available upon request</p>
<p>SHARE INSIGHTS</p> <p>What perspectives or ideas come to mind?</p>	<p>DEVELOP YOUR EAR</p> <p>Observe life with your neighbors</p>
<p>JOIN A BORDER ENCOUNTER</p> <p>Listening trips re-humanize conversations outside the news cycle. Sign-up at ABARA.ORG</p>	

GENERAL INQUIRIES

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Imagination and listening are connected. Significant spiritual and practical implications exist in the collective will is at stake. This is hard work. Are we going to shrink back or lean into the strength of listening for today?

DREAMERS OF THE DAY

We've lost our equilibrium. The art of listening seems to be absent in today's polarized world. We're inundated with what Dylan Robinson describes in *Hungry Listening* as "white noise."

The rise of harmful rhetoric, xenophobia, and white Christian nationalism is serious. Behind the noise is an outcry that too often goes unheard. I'm learning to observe five timeless cries of us, and the urgent time to listen is now, that continue today.

Knock at Midnight MLK | Luke 11

"Ears of a guilty people" W.E.B. Du Bois

Ancient Shema "Listen & Obey"

INTRODUCTION

KEEP THE BREAD FRESH

Listening in Response to the Cries of Our Day
Nate D. Ledbetter



Drawing by Artist, Activist, and Baker George "Yorch" Pérez of Juárez, MX

LISTENING DEFINED

In the words of Mary Oliver, "Attention is the beginning of devotion."

To Listen (attentiveness)

- within/ around
- inward/outward
- mutual hospitality
- embodied empathy
- auditory awareness
- common memory
- call-and-response

DAILY PRACTICE:

WHAT QUESTIONS ARE WE ASKING?
WHAT CRIES ARE WE HEARING?

- N - notice** (again)
- D - discern** (today)
- R - respond** (repeat)

"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space lies our power to choose. And in our choice lies our growth and our freedom." - Viktor E. Frankl

Ultimately, listening is inseparable from a life of meaningful action. Listening keeps the bread fresh.

CRY OF HUMANITY
TOWARD REPAIRING THE WORLD



We all share the cry. We all ache in the chest on some level. We all long for things to be made right again. This cry is evident within us.

The Lord's Prayer is a communal prayer, "Give us today *our* daily bread." We all need nourishment. We all need manna, and everyone is meant for flourishing,

Here's what keeps me up at night: Is the prayer yet to be fulfilled if I have access to bread while others do not?

Edward Collins Vacek describes "Orthokardia" as an essential tenet of our interior life. Orthokardia is "the ordered affections that unite us with God, ourselves, other people, and the world."

CRY OF THE DIVINE
TOWARD THE SACRED HEART OF GOD



The first cry is the Divine Cry. Jesus wept. God co-suffers with humanity. If I have any ability to cry over what is undone, unjust, off-kilter, or unloving, if I have any ability to love, it comes first from the solidarity of God's liberating love. God is love and we love because God first loved us.

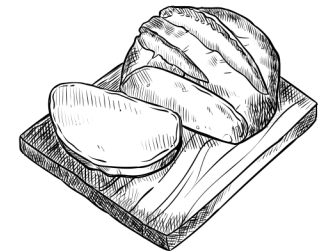
DAILY PRACTICE

WHERE DO YOU NOTICE THE DIVINE CRY?
WHAT MOVES THE HEART OF GOD?

- Resting without apology (the pause)
- Listening prayer as Trust Walk
- Regenerating Christ Consciousness

"Every shut eye ain't sleep. I am resting my eyes and listening for what God wants to tell me."

Grandmother of Tricia Hersey,
Rest Is Resistance



DAILY PRACTICE

WHERE DO YOU HEAR HUMANITY'S CRY?
WITH WHOM DO YOU BREAK BREAD?

- Listening online AND offline
- Observing reoccurring patterns & symbols
- Remembering our shared humanity

"My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together."

Archbishop Desmond Tutu
UBUNTU Philosophy

CRY OF THE OPPRESSED



This violent world is a twisting of God's reality, a shadow, and yet God's realm is pressing in and one day will fully restore our loss and pain. The Exodus story reminds us of God's deliverance in response to the cry of the oppressed. The book of James depicts workers crying out for fair wages. These are a few examples of many.

We need the ethic of Jesus ("orthothetics") to bring right order to our discernment when unjust narratives, policies and laws linger. Dr. Emily M. Townes earnestly calls our generation away from our "premeditated indifference." Let us organize with our ears with decisive love.

DAILY PRACTICE

WHAT PATTERNS ARE WE NOTICING?
WHERE ARE WE SUMMONED TO COURAGE?

- Discerning nonviolent faith and citizenship
- Teaching history as prophetic gospel work
- Evoking jazz/blues as adaptive listening

CRY OF THE COSMOS



We hear the cry of the cosmos, of all that is. We are participants in a long line of others. We are unfinished, in process, and still learning as we orient our lives around the reality of God's Kingdom way. As St. Paul wrote, "All of creation groans..."

Therefore, we cry aloud as oceans suffer humanity's toxic waste. We cry aloud as the atmosphere shifts with another deadly storm. We cry aloud as sonic imperialism fills the air waves. We cry aloud for hope to come close where life feels torn. The cosmos is longing for re-alignment, for things to be as they were first intended to be.

All living things, all creatures on earth and under the earth, in the heavens and among the galaxies, across the waters, in the valleys and further below, at the point of mountain ranges, in the whirlwind and thunder, in the still quiet grounds of the forest, at the dawn of a sun rise, where the birds sing freely, where land and sea meet, where planets and stars shine bright, wherever living things unknowingly exist, the universal order cries in the ear of God.

DAILY PRACTICE

WHAT ARE YOUNG VOICES HEARING?
WHAT WISDOM ARE THE ELDERS OFFERING?

- Naming our unfinished transformation
- Observing life through auditory awareness
- Imagining that another world is possible

WORD OF GRATITUDE

"Keep the Bread Fresh" is inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's sermon "Knock at Midnight" as a call and response to remain ready and attentive for today.

This resource is intended as a starting point to build upon as an attempt to honor those who've gone ahead of us. The observations here are a reflection of principles and practices that I'm attempting to learn over the course of my life journey. My gratitude runs deep. My story is an extension of countless leaders known and unknown, those off the beaten path, and many others who pursue meaningful action informed by deep reflection. As a result, this project is only made possible through the collective wisdom of neighbors and friends who continue to speak into my life through their patient mentoring.

BELOVED COMMUNITY

TOWARD BREAD & WINE AS LIFESTYLE

Beloved Community reflects back, roots down, and moves toward God's dream from the beginning: "Christ came to destroy the dividing wall of hostility" to form "one new humanity" (kinship) as described in the book of Ephesians.

The open table of communion invites us toward remembrance, solidarity, and wholeness. Christ chose to lay down his life for all. We are invited to lay down our lives for one another.

The Open Table of Christ holds us together through mutual submission, respect, trust, and memory. Jesus of Nazareth offers bread & wine in remembrance of his life, death, and resurrection, even with those we adamantly disagree with as a new kind of familia that transcends our differences. The table is an invitation to suspend our judgments. Together, we re-member one another as members of One Body of Christ.

Dr. King invited many to consider The World House. This was a call to remember God's heart for all people everywhere. Here we listen for what is not being said, to stay at the table, to keep trusting through responsible dialogue where all are always loved.

We welcome others as Christ welcomes us.



HER NAME IS WISDOM

"Wisdom cries without: she utters her voice in the streets." -Proverbs 1

She stays on the block and she hovers above the fray. She's known in the streets as Lady Wisdom, and her best friend is justice. Yet we are too easily distracted by her neighbor's call, Fear. We give in to Fear as our vision remains faint, unclear, insular. We stand on the shoulders of those ahead of us, building upon the outcry of generations past – our elders and ancestors – a great cloud of witnesses – the faithful lives of stories that still speak Wisdom for today.

We acknowledge that we are vulnerable and fragile in ways we do not understand. We walk away from Wisdom, from truth-telling, from the force of love toward others, our siblings, for children whose lives are yet unborn. Wisdom still cries aloud for justice as families face hardship, as neighbors cry in the night, as another bullet flies, war and rumors of war, as children raise children, as light fades from their eyes, as parents attempt to survive, as the older among us are set aside. Wisdom awaits unlearned, and Fear roams the block.

Here we are reminded of an old truth: "God is the God who wastes nothing." God actively offers God-self by joining us in our suffering. Divine listening then is the response of a liberating God who hears our cry, joins our cry, and responds with hope that one day the world will be made whole again. Wisdom awaits. There is enough bread for all of us.

The following Scriptures touch on five timeless cries, and are not intended to be exhaustive. Examples are provided for meditation: Jer 14:17, 1 Sam 3:10, Ps 22, Joel 1:14, Amos 5, James 1:19, John 11:35, Matt 11:15, Ps 34, II Cor 1:8-9, Ex 3:9, Job 29, James 5:4, Jer 12:4-6, Ex 16 & 23, Numbers 11, Job 31:38, Lk 19:40, Ps 19, Romans 8:22, Col 1, Zach 8:4, Rev 5, Is 20:21

MANNA

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one.



"Therefore, what I hear, hears me."

Hernández Castellanos/Toro
BORDER-LISTENING/ESCUCHA-LIMINAL