



**Course Name: Communication - 5 Ps (part 3b Pay Attention)**

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**Course description:**

Because effective communication is difficult, we have to work daily to improve this skill. In previous lessons we looked at communication through prayer and the necessity of preparation in our planning to communicate more effectively. One of the most critical steps to effectively communicate involves listening, or paying attention. This lesson continues our discussion that focuses on how to improve our ability to listen.

**Course Objectives: By the end of this class students will have:**

- A. Discussed six reasons and ways people listen today, as described by H. Norman Wright.
- B. Learned four levels of listening, as developed by Jimmy Tuten Jr.
- C. Practiced a method designed to improve listening.

**Outline of the class:**

- A. Make sure the class is divided into groups of three and four. Take about 10-15 minutes and ask each group to list out as many reasons and ways people listen as come to mind.
- B. After each group is finished, ask them to share their lists one at a time until everyone has used their suggestions. The suggestions shared may be included in the information below, but share the list provided by H. Norman Wright.
- C. Wright provides the following list as reasons and ways people listen.
  - 1. Some listen for the facts, information, and details for their own use.
  - 2. Some listen because they feel sorry for the person.
  - 3. Some listen to gossip because they revel in the story of another person's failures or difficulties.
  - 4. Some listen out of obligation, out of necessity, or to be polite.
  - 5. Some listen because they have an incessant need to pry and probe into other people's lives.
  - 6. Some listen because they care. Wright goes on to say, "Sensitive listening and hearing are open mine shafts to intimacy."

- D. Jimmy Tuten Jr. presented four levels of listening, as listed below. Discuss each of these levels and how they relate to our relationships in the home, at work, in the community, and in the church.
1. The first level is *importance*. Everyone tends to give attention to people of importance. The tendency also exists to only listen to specific areas of importance, or at least the areas which are deemed important to the one listening.
  2. The second level is *comprehension*. With all of the available media today, our minds must handle a great deal of information. The information is often never really heard because of our preconceived attitudes or ideas.
  3. The third level is *exclusion*. This characterizes the individual who will not give attention to what is being said. The prejudice that exists blocks any possibility of receiving information beneficial to the individual. Arrogance rules the day. They feel they have no need for additional information.
  4. The fourth level is *no action*. The person who hears the message may understand it completely and perfectly, but chooses to do nothing about it.
- E. As a way of practicing our ability to listen to one another, ask the group to divide up into smaller groups of two each. Once everyone is with a partner, ask each pair to follow the instructions listed below.
1. The first time around, ask one person to share details of a driving experience where they witnessed a traffic accident and how people responded. This can be something on television or personal experience. Be explicit and as detailed oriented as possible. Who was involved, how did it happen, what was the extent of the damage, were people hurt, did police, fire department, or an ambulance arrive, etc.
  2. While the details are explained, just listen. Do not think about what you are going to say when they stop talking, just listen attentively to what is said, how it is said, every detail.
  3. Without judging the situation or person, listen with an acceptance of what is being said. Do not react to the facial expression of the other person or the fluctuation of their voice. We tend to miss the meaning of what is said.
  4. After the first person has completed what they wanted to say, the partner must repeat back as closely as possible what they heard.
- F. The purpose of this exercise is to increase our ability to listen, but to listen with genuine interest in the other person and what they are saying to us.
1. People tend to interpret situations differently, so it is important to listen with the intent of understanding.
  2. Repeating back what was heard validates the other person as being understood, plus it allows for correction of misunderstanding.

**Conclusion:**

- A. In our lesson today, we talked about the reasons and ways people listen and the importance of listening.
- B. We also discussed the four levels of listening and practiced a method that will help us improve our ability to listen.
- C. In the next lesson, we will continue our journey to improve communication by examining the next section of the 5 Ps, Practice.