



**Course Name: Communication - 5 Ps (part 4 Practice)**

By Dr. Bob Turner

---

**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 necessity of preparation in our planning to communicate more effectively. We also talked about how to pay attention. In this lesson we learn that communication does not happen by accident. We don't accidentally communicate effectively. It takes practice.

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

- A. Listed a minimum of five ways to practice more effective communication.
- B. Practiced both speaking and listening with one other person.
- C. Considered how this will help improve our communication between leaders and the congregation.

**Outline of the class:**

- A. A post on Facebook found at [lessonslearnedinlife.com](http://lessonslearnedinlife.com) said, "Before you speak, let your words pass through three gates: Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?"
- B. Make sure the class is divided into groups of three and four. Take about 10 minutes to ask each group to make a list of 4-5 ways we can practice more effective communication.
- C. After each group is finished, ask them to share their lists one at a time until everyone has used their suggestions. A few possibilities to add, if they are not mentioned, are below.
  - 1. Clear and concise: practice using simple and action words. Avoid using "run to the dictionary" words.
  - 2. Speak audibly. One of the best ways to practice effective communication is to actually practice saying something. Record what we practice and listen to it. Does it make sense when we hear it? Is it possible there is another angle that makes what we've said more understandable?
  - 3. Video yourself speaking or look in the mirror to watch for cues related to body language. What is our posture when speaking? Do we make eye contact? Are there any repeated gestures that might distract from what we want to communicate?

4. Listen. We talked about paying attention, but practice listening and take time to think about a response. Force yourself to wait before speaking.
  5. Ask questions. This is a great way to learn about the other person. Ask about their favorite place to visit, foods, hobbies, activities, kids, grandkids, etc. Avoid asking closed-ended questions that only require a yes or no response. Ask open-ended questions that begin with How, What, Where, When, Why, etc. Practicing the art of asking good questions strengthens the effectiveness of our communication skills.
- D. Ask the class to pair up in groups of two. In this exercise, each pair will practice communicating in the following:
1. Remember to think first and use concise and clear words to speak.
  2. Practice this exercise by dividing up everyone into pairs and start by having them sit back to back.
    - a. Have everyone divide up into pairs and start by having them sit back to back. Make sure each person knows they have one minute to speak about the subject you give them. The person who is listening cannot speak. They are only allowed to listen. Here is the first question: If you could be any animal what would it be and why? Once both have done the exercise, ask the group as a whole the following:
      - 1) How did you feel as the speaker when you are unable to see the person to whom you are speaking?
      - 2) What did you think while listening to someone you can't see their body language, etc.?
    - b. Next, have all the pairs turn their chairs and face each other, knee to knee. This time, one person speaks for one minute and the other person looks anywhere and everywhere except at the person speaking. Do not look at them. Look around them, up at the ceiling, down at the floor, etc. The person speaking should share about someone that has been a great influence in your life (not Jesus, but friend, family, teacher, etc.). After each person has participated, then ask the group to respond to these questions.
      - 1) How did you feel as a speaker looking at someone and they are not looking at you, in fact looking at everything but you?
      - 2) How about you as a listener? How hard is it to not focus on the person speaking?

- c. For the third part of this exercise, ask each person to face one another. One person speaks as before for one minute. The listener this time looks at the person speaking, but can only respond by using mmm, hmmm, oh, etc. The speaker will talk about something they have planned over the next 3-4 weeks that they are excited about and why they look forward to it. After both have participated, ask the following questions.
    - 1) Again, how did you feel as a speaker to see the person, but to hear their response in the form of mmm, or hmmm?
    - 2) How much different was it for you as a listener?
  - d. For the last part of this exercise, ask each person this time to face one another and engage. While the person speaks, the listener needs to ask questions, respond in any way that engages conversation. The speaker needs to describe something about yourself that is personal that no one else knows. Now, ask the group to describe how much different it was for them as both the speaker and listener?
3. Take a few moments at the close of class to discuss how this exercise will help leaders improve their ability to communicate with congregations.

**Conclusion:**

- A. In our lesson today, we talked about five ways to improve effective communication as leaders and the congregation.
- B. We also practiced speaking and listening to prepare for more effective communication.
- C. In the next lesson, we will continue our journey to improve communication by examining the final section of the 5 Ps, Personal.