

May 2001

How to Listen Actively

Sure the ear is fairly important when it comes to listening, but it is our attitude that can make the difference between simply Hearing and Listening! The Caring Network has sponsored a number of training sessions on Active Listening & we hope, over the next few editions, to bring you a couple of tips on being an Active Listener.

#1 Focus - on what the person is saying. We need to shut the door on everything else happening around us. Perhaps this means asking the person if we can call them back at a mutually agreed on time, or asking someone else to oversee the children for an hour or so. Active Listening demands your undivided attention.

#2 Suspend Judgment – and any preconceived ideas you might have. We need to understand how the individual perceives his or her situation. We need to build a level of trust and rapport. These objectives will be thwarted if we have already cast judgment or get bogged down in trying to judge. We are seeking to understand, not judge.

Human Weakness & Problems = Opportunities To Show Love

We may wonder if someone else's physical or mental problems are a consequence of their sins or failures in faith. However, in a general sense, all of us are infirm and morally imperfect because our sinful nature is not yet fully regenerated even in our new life in Jesus Christ.

Do we wonder about others, as Jesus' disciples wondered about the blind man?

"Who did sin, this man or his parents?"

"Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents", was Jesus' answer, "but that the works of God should be made known in him." Instead of the disdainful judgment of the Pharisees, "You were altogether born in sin", Jesus saw the man's great

need as an opportunity to make known God's care and love. So must we see the human needs of our brothers, sisters, and all people.

Being the Recipient of Caring: A view from our young people

The 'caring' that others show to us does not go unnoticed, and as young people, sometimes it is the smallest acts of kindness that can make the biggest impression.

Kindness by a Stranger- We had just moved into our new house and our phone was not connected yet. So when my swimming course ended an hour early I had no way of contacting home. While I was standing there waiting, a lady from my course asked if I needed a ride. Of course I couldn't turn down the offer. It's these random acts of kindness by a stranger that brighten your day, and make you in turn a better person to others. I thanked this lady very much, and we went our separate ways.

Luke 10:34, "*So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.* (From the story of the Good Samaritan.)

Kindness by an Elder in the Ecclesia - I was at a Bible camp, and I wasn't feeling well because I was overactive and not eating healthily. The camp nurse offered to take me back to her campsite and give me something to feel better. She also offered one of her empty tents on her campsite for me to sleep in for the night if I wasn't up to walking back to my own tent because I was still weak. The nurse also went and got my mother for me, so she knew where I was and that I wasn't feeling well.

The following is advice from the Bible that we found helpful about how to be a caring friend or how we should choose friends, since a good friend is hard to find:

Proverbs 12:26

"The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray."

Proverbs 27:6

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."

Lindsey Cooper, 17 years, Bailey Van Watershoot, 16 years, Ashley Wilkins 15 years. Mississauga, ON

Caring Attributes as seen in Scripture

What does a story about Amalekites, the brook of Besor, and excess plunder teach us about caring? The story, found in 1 Samuel 30, begins when David and his men return home to find that the Amalekites have burned their city and captured their families. David hears that his own men are so anguished that they may kill him, so he finds strength, inquires of the LORD, and organizes a rescue mission. After pursuing and overtaking their enemies, David and his men return home with intact families and the Amalekites' flock and herds. It is a simple war story of loss and conquest...or so it would appear.

Inside the story we actually find David and his six hundred men weeping over the loss of their families, until they have no more strength to weep. We find two hundred men who have to abandon the rescue mission because they are too exhausted to cross the brook Besor in pursuit of the captors. There is a starving servant who betrays his master by leading David straight to the Amalekites. And then David and his men fight for 24 hours, from twilight until the evening of the next day, to free their families. As the victors return home with David's spoil, they are met by the two hundred men who had been left behind. David draws near to them and greets them in peace, but others, intent on affliction, quickly declare that only the rescuers deserve to share the spoil. David corrects them, though, by saying that they must share the plunder with the other men because the LORD has given it to them; without His aid, they would never have defeated the Amalekites. Upon second glance, then, it is actually a complex story of sorrow and providence and grace...which is able to teach us much about caring.

The story teaches us about caring by describing the reactions to loss: weeping, wailing, moaning, and tears. It also goes beyond this to mention the utter exhaustion that can accompany grief. David and his men wept "until they had no more strength to weep." They had lost their power, their force, their capacity, their means (Strong's). It appears that crying oneself to sleep need not be reserved for children. We see this exhaustion again when some of the men cannot even cross a brook. In a literal sense, those who are mourning may not have the physical energy to continue with regular tasks or one might just slow down, walk a little more slowly, think a little more slowly, and wish the world would stop going by so fast.

God gives us another clue into the men's experience through the name of the brook: Besor means cheerful (Strong's). Those who are worn out after losing a loved one may have difficulty crossing over to cheerfulness, just like many of David's faithful followers. And, finally, the story shows that mourning will affect different people in different ways. While some were too exhausted to carry on, others were able to fight for 24 hours, even though they were too tired to weep. One person is incapacitated by grief while another appears unable to sit down for any length of time.

From the story we learn how to share and accommodate grief, instead of condemning or fixing it. As David grieved with his men, their weeping would have been indistinguishable, and we are reminded to weep with them that weep. And we learn to accommodate mourning when we recognize that David, even with his tremendous faith in God, still wept about the temporal, the present, and the things of this world, as we are ought to do. Our Messiah wept with Mary and Martha, which did not reflect a lack of faith. David and Jesus teach us to permit sorrow. In our attempts to cheer someone up, we might be offering cold comfort: "he who sings songs to a heavy heart is like one who takes off a garment on a cold day, and like vinegar on a wound" (Proverbs 25:20).

The story teaches us about caring for the poor in spirit. Living in a society that is obsessed with work and money, we know that sharing the hard-earned plunder with those who do no work is unfair. But, thankfully, grace is not fair, and the soon-to-be-king gives whatever he wants to whomever he wants, especially to the least deserving and to those who are so poor in spirit that they are reduced to begging (Strong's). Let us take our gifts from God (our time, our money, our selves) and share them with others.

Also, the story teaches us to rethink our concept of "work" and to be slow to judge someone's actions: when a person appears to be doing nothing to fight the battle, they might actually be faithfully sitting with the supplies and patiently waiting and getting ready to go meet the coming king.

Finally, the story of the Amalekites, the brook of Besor, and excess plunder teaches us about ourselves as mourners. We are blessed when we mourn and weep, for in our weakness and our sorrow we learn to long for comfort from God. We are blessed when we are so poor in spirit that we are like undeserving beggars without wealth or position or honour, for then God is pleased to give us positions of heavenly royalty. May we greet our fellow sojourners in peace and compassion, and, especially, patience, all the while praying that in His mercy He will heal us all.

Sis. Corina Midgett, Guelph, ON

Upcoming Events

Marriage Seminar

June 2, 2001, God Willing

The Kinsmen Hall, Mississauga, ON

9:00 – 4:30

This day is intended for EVERYONE! Everyone can benefit and everyone has something to contribute. The discussions will be lead by Bre. Ken Curry & David Levin. Please contact Bro. Doug or Sis. Carolyn Jackson with questions, or for registration. dcjackson@sympatico.ca,

Caring Network Resources

- Christadelphian [Care-Line](#), 1 866 823-1039 Toll Free
- Caring Network Website, www.caringnetwork.ca

Publications Available:

- [Coping with Stress](#)
- [Coping with Depression](#)
- [Building a Marriage](#) – A marriage preparation resource
- [Coping With Bereavement](#)
- [Coping With Leaving Home](#)
- [The Perils of Drug and Alcohol Abuse](#)

These publications are available through Sis. Flo Day, 66 Greenfield Rd., Brantford, ON N3R 7E2

ORDER ONLINE HERE!

An Appeal

We would like to have the Caring Network Bulletin reflect our community and so we would be pleased to accept any articles or entries from members of our community, that serve to encourage us, and show real, practical examples of caring. We plan to have the following sections in future bulletins; *Examples of Caring in Scripture, Practical Ways to show Caring, Our Vision of the Kingdom*. We would love to hear from people who have been the recipients of Caring. What form did the caring take and how did it help. We also want to hear from our young people!!

Finally, if anyone has a topic they would like to see covered, *Please let us know!!*

What's Next???

God Willing, we plan to consider the topic of **Marriage** in our next bulletin, and then the topics of **Stress** and **Addictions** in the bulletins to come. Please search through your archives, whether they are on your hard drive, in your long term memory or in the margin of your Bible, for information on these topics.

Please send your suggestions or submissions to:

Sis. Jennifer Daniel, jenniferdaniel@telus.net,

or 4 Foxwood Court, Port Moody, BC V3H 4W7, 604 469-2392