

Where do you start or grow in spending time with God, the scriptures and prayer?

The goal of reading scripture isn't merely knowledge, though study is a great spiritual practice. The goal is knowing God. Within the collection of scripture itself, we often notice the metaphor of hearing God or listening to God.

I will listen to what God the Lord says (85:8).

What an active commitment: I WILL LISTEN!

Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts. (NRSV)

One of the best ways to hear God is to read His story from creation to new creation with a focus on the life and teachings of Jesus, the early church letters, and pointing back into the larger story found in the Jewish scriptures (Old Testament).

Would you commit to LISTENING TO GOD daily/weekly? Here are a few suggestions:

- Carve out 60 minutes a week to pray with an open Bible and journal.
- Spend time daily in silence and solitude.

We have three bible reading options available to help: [Whole-Bible Plan](#) (2-year plan), [Discovery Plan](#) (2-year plan as well but lighter) and the [Daily Office Plan \(Book of Common Prayer\)](#). [Check them out at www.westsidegathering.com/bible-reading-plan-2019](http://www.westsidegathering.com/bible-reading-plan-2019)

This reading plan encourages daily reflection in the Psalms and includes daily readings from the OT and NT and Gospels. You'll be reading through the Psalms more than once a year and through the Bible in 2 years. This plan also stays connected to the church year (from Advent to Pentecost + ordinary time) so you'll be reading scripture that helps you focus on the life and teachings of Christ in the appropriate season. Try spending at least two minutes of silence before and after your reading. The use of a journal to record highlights, prayers, questions and application is widely encouraged and helpful.

- Include a short pause throughout your day to welcome God's presence as you continue the day. Using a simple prayer such as: Jesus free me, Jesus fill me OR I am still and know that you are God can be helpful to quiet your mind and pay attention to God's voice.
- Consider these two main questions at least monthly:
 - o What is God saying to me? (Mainly through scripture but also through the teachings of Christ and how the bible unpacks them. Consider also this question in this season, circumstance, or conversation.)
 - o What am I going to do about it? (How will I respond, repent or reorient as a result of what I'm hearing from God?)
- Make Sunday mornings a priority. We teach through the scriptures in community. Slow down to pray and worship and encourage each other's spiritual journey.
- Join us for our monthly [ABIDE Prayer Night](#).

God promises to speak "to those who turn to him in their heart." No matter what we do or read or how much time we spend trying to listen to God, the shift usually comes when our heart is turned to Him; when we desire in our heart more than anything to hear and receive from Him.