

Preparation for G137 —The Listening Ear

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

- Leo Buscaglia

This fall our church has joined P.A.C.T. (People Acting in Community Together), a network of faith communities who come together for justice campaigns. As our first step, they've recommended that we conduct a Listening Campaign. The idea behind the campaign is that social activists will cultivate relationships with the objective of hearing what is in people's hearts. Listening creates empathy and trust, something that benefits the work and the souls of everyone.

This session invites you to think about the power of listening and how it affects our lives. Here are some questions for you to consider:

1. Give an example of a time when you were able to silence yourself and really listen to someone else. How did it feel? How did it affect your relationship?
2. What could you do to improve your listening skills? This week, try practicing deep listening outside of Small Group Ministry.
3. Think of a time when *you* were really listened to about something that was close to your heart. Conversely, was there a time when you weren't listened to about something that mattered to you? Describe how each situation felt.
4. Do you often feel that your voice is not heard, perhaps at work, within your family, with your partner, or at church?
5. Has there been a time when listening to a stranger made a big difference to you or to them?
6. Do you think there is a difference in how you listen to members of the opposite sex? To people older or younger than yourself?
7. How do you know when it's appropriate to keep quiet and listen or when to give feedback?