

# On Mission

With James & Sharlene Graham



## Great Leaders are Listeners!

*You should continue to be the people's representative before God, bringing their disputes to him. Teach them God's decrees, and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their lives. But select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders over groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten.*

Jeremiah 23:18

New Living Translation (NLT)

**Listening is a skill** to learn and focus on to become a better, more successful leader. <https://www.cornerstone.edu/blog-post/why-leaders-should-be-learners/>

**We learn by listening.**

As a leader, we need to **learn to listen**. **First and foremost**, listen to God and learn to hear His voice and truly listen to what He says. Without listening and hearing His voice we are only working from self and not being led by His voice and His spirit. This is done in our time of prayer.

Next, as a leader we should be **listening to those God has placed in authority over us**, our mentors, coaches or the one who is discipling us. They can teach us things and walk through difficult places with us showing us how to navigate strange waters.

Then, as a leader we need to **learn to listen to those God has given us stewardship over**, our disciples, if you will.

## What is a Leader?

**Definition:** Leadership - Leadership is the ability to influence thoughts and actions. Leadership is the demonstrated ability to innovate, make decisions, influence and motivate to achieve results.

*"The greatest evidence of leadership is reproduction... there is no success without a successor."*

Bertist C. Rouse

*"The Christian life doesn't work because we are such great followers. It works because Christ is such a great Leader."*

David McGee

## Leaders are Listeners

### Jethro's Wise Advice

*"The next day, Moses took his seat to hear the people's disputes against each other. They waited before him from morning till evening. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, 'What are you really accomplishing here? Why are you trying to do all this alone while everyone stands around you from morning till evening?'"* Moses replied, "Because the people come to me to get a ruling from God. When a dispute arises, they come to me, and I am the one who settles the case between the quarreling parties. I inform the people of God's decrees and give them his instructions."

*"This is not good!"* Moses' father-in-law exclaimed. "You're going to wear yourself out—and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself. Now listen to me, and let me give you a word of advice, and may God be with you."

*They should always be available to solve the people's common disputes, but have them bring the major cases to you. Let the leaders decide the smaller matters themselves. They will help you carry the load, making the task easier for you. If you follow this advice, and if God commands you to do so, then you will be able to endure the pressures, and all these people will go home in peace."*

*Moses listened to his father-in-law's advice and followed his suggestions. He chose capable men from all over Israel and appointed them as lead-*

*The greatest gift you can give to those you lead is to authentically listen to them, not so that you can respond, but so that you can understand.*

Dr. James G. Graham

*ers over the people. He put them in charge of groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. These men were always available to solve the people's common disputes. They brought the major cases to Moses, but they took care of the smaller matters themselves. Soon after this, Moses said good-bye to his father-in-law, who returned to his own land."*

Exodus 18:13-27

New Living Translation (NLT)

*"Have any of these prophets been in the Lord's presence to hear what he is really saying? Has even one of them cared enough to listen?"*

When we are listening to them we are learning about them and how we can better serve them where they are in their walk with God and the things they face in that walk, but even more than that we are learning from them. *Yes, I said that....* we are learning from them. We will talk about this more as we go on. We learn so much by listening.

*"Leaders help themselves and others to do the right things. They set direction, build an inspiring vision, and create something new. Leadership is about mapping out where you need to go to 'win' as a team or an organization; and it is dynamic, exciting, and inspiring. Yet,*

while leaders set the direction, they must also use management skills to guide their people to the right destination, in a smooth and efficient way.”

[https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR\\_41.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_41.htm)

Leaders who listen are **able to create trustworthy relationships** that are transparent and breed loyalty. You know the leaders who have their employees’ best interests at heart because they truly listen to them.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/glennlopis/2013/05/20/6-effective-ways-listening-can-make-you-a-better-leader/#175a43461756>

Listening is the **most important skill a leader can master**. It is the basis of so many other skills and traits that make up a leader. However, it is a tough skill to master as it requires us to be more present, attentive, engaged, open and flexible. Good listening skills in this digital era, due to information overload and shortened attention span, is fast becoming an endangered species. *Listening involves paying and making nonverbal cues, appropriate to what is being said.*

Many of us are guilty of starting a conversation and putting a thought or question out there, but we don’t give ourselves a chance to listen to what others have to say because we never stop talking, or we are so busy formulating our reply to what we assume they will say. Don’t just listen with the outer ear but with the inner ear. Listen with the intent to hear and understand.

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/listening-most-important-skill-leader-can-have-brigitte-hyacinth>

*The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn’t said.*

Peter Drucker

*“ Leaders who don’t listen will eventually be surrounded by people who have nothing to say.”*

Andy Stanley

*“A leader must be a good listener. He must be willing to take counsel. He must show a genuine concern and love for those under his stewardship.”*

James Faust

*“The biggest communication problem is we do not listen to understand. We listen to reply,”*

Stephen Covey.

**What is the problem with listening to respond?** The answer is, when you listen to respond, we are generally formulating and answer in our head while the person is talking, i.e. we can miss vital points which might change what we were going to say. The other point is that we stop actually listening and asking questions at this point because we want to say something.

<https://www.business2community.com/communications/truly-listen-someone-instead-listening-respond-01023899>

When we only listen to respond then we are truly not listening. We do not really know what the person is saying until we hear everything.

*To one who listens, valid criticism is like a gold earring or other gold jewelry.*

Proverbs 25:12

New Living Translation (NLT)

*Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise reprover to an ear that listens and learns.*

Amplified Bible (AMP)

To reach our full potential, we must master the art of listening. Really listening. Which means awareness. Which means thinking about what we hear. Which means applying it, if possible, to the leadership challenges at hand.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/meghanbiro/2013/08/04/5-leadership-lessons-listen-learn-lead/#392b532e6b77>

**Do you truly listen to other leaders or your disciples or do you already know everything?**

If you feel you already know everything and others don’t have input in your life, you eventually become like stagnant waters.

If you listen and learn you become a conduit of fresh water to those who God has put in your life. They will come back for more and you will find that it is good for you as well and them.

So start listening to God first and foremost. Then listen to those you have submitted to, those who have disciplesd you, and then listen to those whom God has entrusted to you.



## James & Sharlene’s Partnership Response

YES! I would like to help **James and Sharlene to grow Leaders, train missionaries and raise up a new generation of disciple makers.**

I will help them by:

- Becoming a monthly PARTNER at \$\_\_\_\_\_ Per month
- Enclosed is my ONE TIME GIFT of \$\_\_\_\_\_
- I WILL PRAY FOR THEM.... *Please keep us updated on prayer requests and ministry needs.*

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