

LISTENING IS ALSO LEADERSHIP**By Erenia Mendoza**

We live in a generation that has learned to respond quickly. At the same time, it has forgotten how to listen deeply. In meetings, conversations, and even relationships, we often listen only long enough to prepare our next response. But the Bible shows us a different way. It teaches that true influence does not begin when we speak. It begins when we make someone feel seen, understood, and valued.

In the New Testament, James 1:19 admonishes that, “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” Jesus practiced this principle of active listening constantly. Perhaps one of the most powerful marks of His leadership was the way He listened to people. When we look at the life of Christ, we realize that He not only taught these principles – He lived them. Here are some examples:

Listening Without Interrupting. We read in Luke 24 that on the road to Emmaus the disciples were walking, feeling frustrated and disappointed after the crucifixion. The risen Jesus approached them and asked: “What are you discussing together as you walk along?” He already knew exactly what had happened but patiently allowed them to pour out their hearts before responding. How often do we do the opposite? We interrupt, jump to conclusions, or try to solve everything too quickly.

Showing Genuine Interest. When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well, recounted in John 4, He did not begin the conversation with condemnation or ready-made speeches. He started by creating connection. In a culture in which that woman was ignored and rejected, Jesus made her feel important. He saw her spiritual thirst even before confronting her wounds. People can tell when we are listening merely out of politeness – but they can also tell when there is genuine love in our attention.

Asking Questions Before Assuming Answers. A blind man, Bartimaeus, cried out by the roadside,

“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” (Mark 10:46–52). Jesus stopped and asked: “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus already knew the answer, yet He still chose to ask. Listening is also about giving dignity to others. Many times, we assume people’s needs without truly understanding their pain.

Listening Beyond Words. Jesus often perceived what no one else could hear. He saw fear hidden in Peter, shame in the Samaritan woman, and frustration in the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Active listening is not just about hearing words. It is about perceiving emotions, silences, expressions, and invisible needs. At work, at home, and in relationships, people rarely reveal everything explicitly. Mature leadership learns to listen even to what is left unsaid.

Responding With Grace and Truth. Jesus never listened merely to collect information. His listening always produced care, direction, and transformation. After listening, He encouraged,

confronted, when necessary, healed, taught, and restored. Perhaps the problem today is not only lack of communication. Perhaps it is the lack of presence. We are surrounded by people wanting to be noticed, longing for someone who will truly listen to them. One of the greatest ways to represent Christ in our lives is simply this: stop, look, listen, and love people through the unconditional gift of our attention.

Listening requires humility. It requires patience. It requires genuine interest. And that looks a lot like Christ. Attentive listening is a silent way of loving. Influential people are not always the ones who speak the most, but often the ones who make others feel important.

© 2026. Erenia Mendoza is the National Director of CBMC Brazil and a member of CBMC International's Global Leadership Team. She also serves on CBMC's Executive Committee for Latin America. Born in Nicaragua and raised in Brazil, Erenia built her career in the entertainment industry in distribution and marketing for films and series. She has worked with and for major studios, including Warner Brothers, Sony Pictures and The Walt Disney Company, across Latin America.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between hearing and listening? In your mind, is there a difference? Explain your answer.
2. Why do you think it is so common in our 21st century world for people to struggle when it comes to sincerely listening to others?
3. Does someone you know come to mind who seems skilled at active, attentive listening? What is it about this person that makes him or her stand out as someone who genuinely knows how to listen to other people?
4. Of the various areas that involve listening, as discussed in this Monday Manna, is there one that seems more important than others? Which of them do you think is an area where you personally, could use some improvement?

Challenge for This Week

It never hurts to do an honest self-evaluation. During conversations, or while participating in meetings, try to take a step back and observe yourself. Are you genuinely listening to the other people, or are you impatiently waiting for an opportunity to interject your thoughts?

Enlist the perspectives of others – trusted friends, an accountability partner, a mentor, or a CBMC group you are a part of. Even someone who reports to you at work. Ask them how they would rate you as a listener, if they feel genuinely listened to when you are interacting with them.

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Proverbs 10:8, 10:19, 11:13, 12:23, 15:23, 16:21, 17:27-28, 18:13, 20:12, 25:12

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