

### Covenant Life

- As you know we restarted our Community Gatherings this past November and December but decided, due to the resurgence of the covid virus, to hold off our next meeting until the coordinators discern the time is right. Please join us in praying not only for an end of the virus and those affected but also for the Coordinators discernment.
- The audio from our last Community Gathering is [here](#) and the transcript is [here](#).
- Your ongoing financial support is sincerely appreciated. Please donate online [here](#) or mail your donations to P.O. Box 225008 Dallas, Tx 75222

**Reflection** - In praying over the readings today I found myself connecting Samuel's listening experience with prayer and "active listening". Active listening requires concentration, understanding, and then a response. When practicing active listening we must set aside the rush to be heard, to offer our opinion or advice and use all our attention to really hear, understand, and remember what we heard.

I thought about this regarding prayer. We have all heard the teaching on prayer that it is a two-way conversation with God and that we must be quiet for half of our prayer time to listen to the Holy Spirit. Quality prayer time involves both our spoken words to God and our listening for His response. So why not apply the principles of active listening to our prayer time?

What a blessing it is when we can devote our full attention to the Lord when we are silent in our private time with Him. What a blessing when we pause regularly during our spiritual reading seeking to really understand how the lessons of the past might apply to me, today. What a blessing it is when we dialogue with a sister or brother about what we have received to affirm that it is from the Lord. What a blessing it is when we strive to remember what we had heard, maybe even journaling it so that we can come back to it and appreciate the reality that God is real and speaking to us every day - if we but listen, actively.

The second thing that struck me from the reading today was Samuel's response and what happened after. Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening" and then he grew up and "*the LORD was with him, not permitting any word of his to be without effect.*" Samuel announced his intention to listen and was rewarded with the Lord's presence.

Isn't that what all of us want? *Lord, I commit to listening to You and seeking your presence in my life!* Of course, the scriptures provide us many examples of those who have listened and said Yes, Mary and Jesus are of course the most perfect examples. Lord, help me to follow the example of Mary ("*may it be done to me*") and Jesus ("*yet not my will*"). Even King David in the responsorial psalm proclaimed, "*to do your will, O my God, is my delight, and your law is within my heart!*"

In the Gospel the two disciples were certainly listening when John said "*Behold, the Lamb of God*". Their lives were forever changed when they quickly responded by following Jesus and answered His questions and stayed with Him. This is when the impossible becomes possible. When our actions are not powered by our will, resolve, and resources but rather by God's - after listening and responding to what He is about. You can almost sense Andrew's excitement after meeting Jesus and darting off to find his brother Simon and tell him about Jesus. Most of us had this same experience when we first met our Lord. Andrew's response was the same as what God asks of us, he brought Simon to Jesus. This is exactly what He asks of us today. To actively listen and then to respond to what He is about.

Let us pray "*Lord God, I thank You for the day you revealed Yourself to me and that I said yes. I repent of the times I have put other people or things before You. Today, I recommit to actively listening to You. I commit to doing this every day. Speak to me, I am listening. Know that I choose you. Not my will but Your will be done in my life. I want to be an instrument that You can use to bring those who do not know You into a deeper relationship with You. Use me. I say Yes to You. Amen.*"

God bless,

David