

Tower Chimes article for April, 2010

*“O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice...” Ps. 5:3a*

Leo Buscaglia, who was a popular author and speaker some years ago, and whose main focus was the topic of loving relationships, told of an experience he had while taking an airplane flight. A woman, who recognized who Leo Buscaglia was, sat down beside him and immediately poured out the woes in her life. At the end of the flight the woman said, “Oh, Mr. Buscaglia, you have helped me so much!” Leo Buscaglia hadn’t said a word during the entire flight. What he had done was listen.

Sam Keen, another author, wrote a magazine article in which he talked about how we talk with one another, particularly to those in our closest relationships. His suggestion was that if we truly want to love and honor the person who is speaking to us and to whom we are listening, we will leave all of our time-keeping devices outside of our conversation space.

A few weeks ago we began a new study at Wesley called *Companions in Christ*. This 7-week study is an opportunity to get acquainted with 6 spiritual practices that can help us to be more in touch with our own spiritual journey, and more aware of God’s voice and God’s activity in our lives. One of the upcoming spiritual practices we will be looking at is “holy listening.” “Holy listening” is described as listening deeply to each other. It begins with the realization that we are incredibly valuable, and that “God gives us an incredibly valuable gift in one another.” And because God’s Spirit lives within us, we are ‘means of grace’ to one another—meaning, that each of us can be a means through God comes to, touches, and encourages another person.

God meant for us to practice the art of holy listening in all of our relationships which includes our communities of faith. In fact, many people are searching for a safe place where they can develop deep and caring relationships with others, where they can share their joys and concerns, and be listened to and supported in their life journey. In the Christian community, our Lord gives us permission to hold each other lovingly accountable in our walk with him as we are in conversation with each other, to listen with our head and our heart, to show respect and give support, and to recognize that God may also be speaking to us about our own journey through what others are sharing with us.

As we are now living in the Easter season, we celebrate Jesus’ resurrection from the dead and the life and salvation that he brought to us. May we see “holy listening” as a gift of life that we can give to each other, even as our holy God is always available to listen to us.

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Ruth