

Session 4

Sacred Listening
week starting March 19



OPENING PRAYER

Open with your own prayer, or the Prayer for Neighbors found at sov.church/neighboring.

OPENER (CHOOSE ONE)

- Do you know a great listener? Describe what makes them so, and how it makes you feel when you are with them.
- When is it difficult for you to be a good listener?

REFLECT ON SUNDAY'S SERMON

- What stood out or inspired you from the message this week?
- Do you have questions? What did you learn?

READ & DISCUSS

Christ-followers talk about the importance of sharing one's faith. Often that is in the form of explaining to someone else the difference following Christ makes in one's life. Have you considered that receiving someone else's story can be another form of sharing your faith? Let's look at Jesus' example. Jesus was asked 307 questions and only answered a handful directly. He asked 183 questions in return. Jesus asked questions to draw out others, and was an excellent listener. He shows us that good relationships involve being present, listening well, and staying attuned to others' feelings and needs.

Read John 11:1–44. *Have various members read parts out loud.*

1. What do we learn about Jesus in verses 5 & 6? Explain why He delayed going to Lazarus and his family.
2. Describe the relationship Jesus has with Martha and Mary. How did Jesus demonstrate a posture that was calm, curious, creative and compassionate?
3. What impact do you think this situation had on Martha and Mary's faith? How did Jesus minister to them in this situation? How might it have equipped them to minister to others?
4. Has your faith been impacted by a difficult situation you've been through? Or, how has God shown His care for you during a difficult time in your life? Explain.
5. How can listening to someone else be a demonstration of faith?
6. Is God wanting you to show care to someone specific by listening to them? What is a good next step? How can this group support and encourage you?

LIVE IT OUT

1. What Live It Out neighboring step did you take this past week? How did it go?
2. Discuss your Block Maps. Share any progress you've made since last week. Are any relationships moving from stranger to acquaintance, or acquaintance to a relationship? Do you have any stories to share? Consider sharing a story at sov.church/neighboring.
3. Share one small "next step" you sense God calling you to take this week. Find ideas at sov.church/neighboring. Be ready to report back at your next meeting.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, we are so grateful you are a relational God, who shows us how to have healthy relationships. Thank you for teaching us through the example of Jesus' friendship with Lazarus' family. Help us to be present with and attuned to others. Help us to be empathetic and caring listeners. We pray specifically for our interactions with the following neighbors (invite group members each to offer a neighbor's name). May our neighbors experience Your love through us. Amen.

RESOURCES

- Visit sov.church/neighboring for resources and practical ways to reach out to neighbors.
- Find block maps, videos and additional discussion questions at artofneighboring.com/resources.
- Want to dig deeper? Read and discuss *The Art of Neighboring* by Jay Pathak & Dave Runyon.