

HOW TO LISTEN!

Older children can sometime cause problems for their parents. We teach them to be honest, but then they get too honest. My children laugh and say, "Don't ask Daddy anything if you don't want him to talk for an hour." This sounds very harsh to me, but it is true and honest. I do tend to talk too much - please be kind and don't laugh or say "Amen".

Someone has said that God gave us one mouth and two ears to listen twice as much as we talk, But James says it is "a little member that boasts great things" (3:5). I found these "Keys to Good Listening" and thought they might help us work on our listening problem.

1. Think like the other person. Their problems and needs are important.
2. Limit your own talk. We don't listen good if we are not quiet.
3. Listen for ideas -- not just words. You want to get the whole idea.
4. Concentrate. Focus your attention on what "they" are saying. Shut out distractions.
5. Don't interrupt. A pause doesn't mean they are finished saying everything.
6. Take notes. It may be good to write things down that you wish to cover later.
7. Ask questions -- to better understand the problem or to clarify a point.
8. Don't allow irritations at things being said to anger you.
9. Don't jump to conclusions or try to complete their thought, allow them to talk.
10. Show the person you are listening by responding "yes" or "I see".
11. This may be the hardest: Practice listening. Let this become a habit.

We must work on taming our tongue. James said in 3:9 "But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." That does not mean we should give up trying but redouble our efforts to control it.

When the tongue gets out of control be willing to say, "I am sorry".

It may help us to talk to God more and listen to others.

Remember, if we are quiet, people may think we are smart, but if we open our mouth it may prove we are foolish.

Charles

