



WOMEN'S MINISTRY *newsletter*



The Art of Listening and Asking Questions

Listening and asking questions sound simple. Yet anyone who has tried to do them well knows they are anything but easy. These are not merely communication skills; they are leadership practices. Often, growth as a leader happens not in big moments, but in the ordinary conversations we have every day.

Before you think, "I'm not really a leader," let me gently challenge that thought. Leadership is key characteristics and behavior, not title. Whether you serve on a ministry team, guide children, mentor someone, encourage a friend, teach, volunteer, or simply show up consistently for others, you are influencing people around you.

The First Art

Let's start with listening.

Listening is more than hearing words. It is a disciplined, intentional act. Many of us are busy caring for people, solving problems, and moving from one need to the next. We naturally want to help.

And if we're honest, some of us have already solved the problem, created a three-step action plan, and mentally added it to next week's calendar before the other person has even finished talking.

The risk is what I call *self-focused listening*. Meaning, being more focused on what we are going to say next than on understanding the person in front of us.

This may sound counterintuitive but stay with me: if we want to become better listeners, we need to stop thinking.

Effective listening requires resisting the urge to interrupt, rush, or formulate an answer before someone has fully shared what is on their heart.

Sometimes people simply want to be heard.

The Second Art

This leads directly to the second skill: asking better questions.

Many of us default to fixing. We offer advice and solutions because we genuinely want to help. But sometimes our desire to help can unintentionally keep others from developing their own strength and next steps.

Strong leaders do something different.

They lead with curiosity.

They "peel the onion," asking thoughtful questions that move beyond the surface and uncover what is really happening underneath.

They also practice what I call *emptying the cup*. Which means setting aside assumptions, judgments, and preconceived answers so they can fully engage with the person in front of them. Simple shifts in our questions can make a significant difference.

Questions beginning with *what* and *how* tend to invite reflection and ownership. They create space for people to think, process, and grow. These are questions like, "What do you think we should do?" "What are your thoughts about next steps?" "How do you think we should move forward?" "How can I support you?"

So consider one conversation you have this week. What would it look like to listen to understand rather than respond? To ask one more thoughtful question than you normally would?

Because strong leadership is not defined by what we say. It is defined by the space we create for others to discover their voice.

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You should also know

Recent webinar



On June 11, 2026, WELS Women's Ministry hosted the webinar "Sacred Rhythms: Building a Life of Daily Devotion."

Have you ever felt guilt when it comes to studying God's Word? Maybe you don't know where or how to start, maybe it's the busyness of life. Maybe you aren't understanding the words you read. Whatever it is, you are not alone.

Our panelists, Laura Falck, Jenn Mueller, Lou Ann Mokwa, and Moira Schulz shared some great insights on how spending time in God's Word can look different for everyone but making the most of whatever time we have with the Lord is key. Jenn said it best, "Make time for a devotion to have life quiet down; nothing gives the peace that devotional life does." They reminded us that, regardless of the time or resources we invest in studying his Word, knowing what God says will help us fight temptation, discern truth from lies, and be built up in the Holy Spirit. It truly is time well spent. God promises it will be!

This sacred rhythm is time well spent. Let's build a life of daily devotion!

If you missed the live Zoom, or want to watch it again, click the link below to watch the recording!

[Watch webinar](#)

The webinar panelists also shared helpful resources for studying God's Word.

[Webinar resources](#)



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Women's Ministry exists to nurture, encourage, and equip women to faithfully use their gifts for service in God's kingdom. [Learn More.](#)



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