Sermon Overview

- **Sermon Title / Main Scripture:** *Be Quick to Listen* (Series: *Aspects of Love*) | **Luke 24:13–35** and **James 1:19** (with Mark 10:46–52, Psalm 116:1–2, Hebrews 4:15, Romans 12:15, James 2:15–16, and Colossians 4:6).
- **Central Theme:** True Christian love is expressed through the rare generosity of undivided attention—making listening our first response rather than rushing to speak, judge, or fix. Following the pattern of Jesus, who stopped for the marginalized and walked patiently with the grieving, we love others deeply when we set aside our own agendas and make the conversation about them.
- **Key Takeaways:**
    - **Listening is a primary posture of love:** Being "quick to listen" (James 1:19) does not mean listening fast, but making attentive listening our immediate first reflex before offering words or opinions.
    - **Jesus models unhurried, question-led attention:** Whether stopping for Bartimaeus in a noisy crowd or walking miles with two heartbroken disciples on the road to Emmaus on resurrection day, Jesus consistently drew people out with questions and listened before he spoke.
    - **Good listening is an active, disciplined skill (L.I.S.T.E.N.):** Loving listeners intentionally remove distractions, invite others to share, stay silent without rushing to fix, test their understanding, empathize with underlying feelings, and respond with grace-filled care.

Small Group & Personal Study Guide

1. Orienting Questions

Think about our everyday experiences of trying to be heard in a noisy, distracted world.

- The sermon quotes Simone Weil: *"Attention is the purest and rarest form of generosity"* (and love). Why do you think genuine, undivided attention has become so rare in our culture today?
- Recall a time when you went through a difficult season or simply needed to talk, and someone truly listened to you. What did that person do—or not do—that made you feel heard and loved?
- Conversely, the preacher shared two honest examples from his week: someone who hijacked a conversation to talk about himself, and a moment where the preacher asked a question while his mind was elsewhere. Which of these two traps are you more prone to falling into when conversing with others?

2. Observation Questions

Read **Luke 24:13–35**, **Mark 10:46–52**, and **James 1:19** together, keeping the sermon's movements in mind.

- In **Mark 10:46–52**, how does the crowd respond to the blind beggar Bartimaeus, and how does Jesus' response contrast with theirs before he performs any miracle?
- Look closely at **Luke 24:13–27**. On the very day of his resurrection—arguably the most important day in history—how does Jesus initiate and sustain his conversation with the two upset disciples on the road to Emmaus? What specific questions does he ask them?
- At what point in the Emmaus road encounter does Jesus finally begin to teach and explain the Scriptures, and how do the disciples respond to him in verses 28–32?
- Look at **Psalm 116:1–2**. What specific reason does the psalmist give for loving the Lord and committing to call on him for life?
- Review the **L.I.S.T.E.N.** framework introduced in the sermon (*Lean in, Invite, Stay silent, Test understanding, Empathise, Next step*). Which specific behaviors stand out to you in how the sermon describes checking our understanding and listening for feelings?

3. Interpretation Questions

Unpacking the biblical principles and theological heart behind listening.

- Jesus is omniscient—he already knew what Bartimaeus needed and why the two disciples on the road to Emmaus were grieving. Why, then, did Jesus ask them *"What do you want me to do for you?"* and *"What are you discussing together as you walk along?"* instead of jumping straight to the answer or the healing?
- How does the truth of **Psalm 116:1–2** (that God bends his ear to hear our cries) and **Hebrews 4:15** (that Jesus is a High Priest who sympathizes with our weaknesses) shape our motivation and capacity to listen to others?
- The sermon states that *"Good listeners suspend judgement and resist fixing,"* noting that waiting to understand does not mean agreeing with or approving of every view or choice. Why is it so important—both relationally and spiritually—to separate *listening to understand* from *endorsement or agreement*?
- How do **James 2:15–16** (meeting practical needs) and **Colossians 4:6** (speech full of grace, seasoned with salt) guard us from thinking that good listening means we never act or speak truth? How does listening actually prepare us to speak and serve more faithfully?

4. Application Questions

Putting the word into practice in our relationships, homes, workplaces, and church life.

- The sermon closes with a piercing diagnostic: *"If I want to do all of the talking, it is all about me. If I am distracted by other things that I find more interesting, it is all about me. If I am planning what I am going to say next, it is all about me. Listening says, 'It is all about you.'"* Which of those three "all about me" habits most frequently hijacks your attention?
- Look back at the **L.I.S.T.E.N.** acrostic:
    - **L – Lean in:** Give full attention; remove distractions; put your agenda aside.
    - **I – Invite:** Ask open, curious questions and use encouragers (*"Tell me more"*).
    - **S – Stay silent:** Allow pauses; don't interrupt, finish sentences, or rush to fix.
    - **T – Test understanding:** Paraphrase content, reflect feeling, and ask *"Have I got that right?"*
    - **E – Empathise:** Acknowledge experience and feelings without rushing to fix.
    - **N – Next step:** Respond with care, offer help, pray, or follow up later.

Which **one** of these six steps is your strongest area right now, and which **one** needs the most intentional growth this week?

- What practical boundaries around technology (phones, TV, smartwatches) or mental busyness do you need to set in your home or workplace so the people closest to you know they have your full attention?
- Who is one person in your life right now—a spouse, child, colleague, neighbor, or church member—who is carrying a heavy burden or holds a different perspective from yours, who simply needs you to listen to them this week?

Leader's Facilitation Guide

Facilitator Notes

- **On Observation & Interpretation (Jesus' Questions in Luke 24 & Mark 10):** Group members may wonder if asking questions when you already have an idea of the answer feels artificial. Help the group see that Jesus' questions were never manipulative traps; they were invitations for the grieving or marginalized person

to pour out their heart, process their pain in his presence, and experience relational dignity before receiving his truth or healing.

- **On Application (Practicing the L.I.S.T.E.N. Table):** Avoid letting the discussion remain purely theoretical. If time permits, consider breaking into pairs for 4 minutes where Person A shares a real pressure from their week while Person B practices **only** *Invite*, *Stay silent*, and *Test understanding* (*"So what you're saying is... Have I got this right?"*) without offering any advice or "fixing".
- **Modelling the Sermon in Group:** Because this study is about listening, pay special attention to group dynamics tonight! Gently encourage quieter members (*"Tell us more about that"*), allow comfortable silences after asking a question, and model paraphrasing before moving to the next topic.

Tension Point / Anticipated Pushback

- **The Challenge:** *"If I just listen and empathize without immediately correcting someone when they are wrong—or without giving them the solution I can clearly see—aren't I compromising truth or being unhelpful?"*
- **Pastoral Navigation:** Validate the desire to help and to uphold biblical truth, pointing out that the sermon explicitly affirms a time to speak, disagree respectfully, offer advice, and take practical action (**Next step**; James 2:15–16; Colossians 4:6). Gently remind the group of **Proverbs 18:13** (cited in the sermon's chart: answering before listening) and the pattern of Jesus on the Emmaus road. Jesus did not compromise truth—he thoroughly opened the Scriptures to them—but he did so *only after* he had walked with them, asked questions, and listened to their whole story. People rarely receive our truth or advice until they first know we have genuinely heard their heart.

Family & Children's Table Talk

- **Big Idea for Kids:** One of the best ways we show Jesus' love to others is to stop talking, put away our distractions, and really listen with our ears, our eyes, and our hearts.
- **Dinner Table Prompts:**
    1. When Jesus met blind Bartimaeus and the two sad friends walking on the road, he stopped and asked them questions so he could listen to them first. How can you tell when someone in our family is *really* listening to you versus only pretending to listen?
    2. If we were to give ourselves a score out of 10 at the dinner table for putting away screens, looking at each other, and not interrupting, what score would we get today—and what is one way we can make it a 10 tomorrow?