



# Kingdom Living – Listening to God

Date: Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Speakers: Michael Munson, Becky Stamps

Key Verses: Jeremiah 1:1-14

## Summary

This week is the first in our 'Kingdom Living' series, about Vineyard Values. What's the first thing we need to do if we want to live for the Kingdom God's building? Learn to LISTEN to God and what He's doing, so we can do it too. SEEK THE KING, GET THE KINGDOM!

Jeremiah is someone who learns to listen to God. From his story we learn three things:

**LOVE:** It starts with God: His love for us. He knows us, He chooses us and He gives us authority. It all starts with Him and His grace: this makes us secure. We know God wants to speak to us because He loves us and He's our dad; He's chosen to have a relationship with us! Love is also the reason God wants to speak to Israel, despite what they've done, He loves them and wants relationship with them. Love is where we start when we pray for ourselves or for others.

Jeremiah responds to God with fear; God responds to Jeremiah's fear with more love, by reassuring him verbally but also coming to him, touching him and changing him.

**LISTENING:** From this point on, Jeremiah is expectant, listening for God's voice. We need to do the same: like any relationship, listening is the way to understand both what someone is thinking and who someone is. It's how you grow closer to them. God is no different: we need to set aside time to listen to God, whether that's in silence, on a country walk, as we listen to music, as we do something physical like running or housework, by meditating on Scripture or by being creative (painting, drawing etc).

ASKING QUESTIONS: The most astounding thing about this passage is verse 11. When God does speak to Jeremiah, His chosen prophet, it's a question! God is inviting Jeremiah into a conversation, to start a journey with him. He cares about what Jeremiah has to say and speaks to him in a way that fits with who he is. This also means Jeremiah is free to ask questions: and that we should be too. We can expect that each time we pray, we can see or hear something that will need clarifying: asking questions of God in those moments is exactly what God wants as it deepens our relationship with Him. Asking questions (and expecting God to answer) will benefit us throughout our Christian journey and especially when we pray specifically for ourselves or others. It helps us move beyond discernment, or initial understandings and promptings of the Spirit, into what God wants to do or say in that situation.

### **Questions for small groups**

1. How secure do you feel in the fact that God loves you and wants to talk to you?
2. What's your favourite way to pray and listen to God?
3. What way to listen to God would you like to try this week?

### **Activity (pick the one that will engage/stretch your group the most – or choose another of your own)**

EITHER: Get into threes and pray for each other. Put some music on in the background if this helps you. Have your Bible ready in case God wants to use a passage of Scripture. Use the process from Jeremiah: love the person you're praying for. Ask God for His heart for them. Expect God to speak and listen! If you get a word, picture, feeling etc., ask God what he wants you to do with it. He may say share it, He may want you to pray into it or pray in a different direction. After a few minutes, swap round and pray for someone else in the group.

OR: Plan a prayer activity which will stretch your group's ability to hear from God. Try going for a walk around your neighbourhood, putting some music on and painting what you see God saying, or practicing meditating on Scripture together. You can find more creative prayer ideas here: <http://www.24-7prayer.com/EncouragingCreativePrayer>