

LISTENING SKILLS

IN ORDER TO BE A SUCCESSFUL GROUP LEADER, YOU MUST BE A GOOD LISTENER. YOU MUST BE WILLING AND ABLE TO LISTEN TO YOUR GROUP MEMBERS. THESE SKILLS ARE ESSENTIAL TO YOUR LEADERSHIP.

- **CONFIRM WHAT YOU HEARD.** As the leader, if you are struggling with understanding what your group member is saying, try summarizing their thoughts in your own words. Try, “What I hear you saying is...”
- **DON’T INTERRUPT.** When you interrupt someone, or a group member interrupts another, they will be less likely to contribute to the group’s discussion.
- **EYE CONTACT AND BODY LANGUAGE.** Be sure, as the leader, you are sitting up straight and you are keeping eye contact with those who are talking.
- **LISTEN ACTIVELY.** While a group member is talking, do not think about your response or what you are going to say. Instead, listen while they are talking. Encourage your group members to do the same.
- **USE FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS OR 2ND LEVEL QUESTIONS.** When your group member responds to a question, follow it up with a second question such as, “How does this relate back to the scripture text?” or “How can you apply this to your specific situation?” These 2nd level questions ensure both the individual and the group that you are actively listening to them.
- **STOP TALKING.** No matter how hard you try, you cannot both talk and listen at the same time.
- **BE ALERT.** Pay special attention to the body language of your group members, especially as they are talking. Be on the watch for non-verbal cues from your group members.