



# Links Players

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## Listening

*Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil. Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. (Ecclesiastes 5:1-2, ESV)*

I hit my tee shot and jumped into the cart, but Doctor Parkinson appeared in front of us. He peered through the front and said, "I am going to ask you a question, and you have one hole to think about it and give me an answer."

"Okay," we said. Our curiosity joined his smile. Doctor Parkinson is a gentle giant of a man and when he speaks, you lean in and listen intently.

While the question and the answer aren't important for our discussion today, my heart and spirit are still listening to Dr. Parkinson's words two weeks later. The quality of listening is a theme that weaves its way throughout the Biblical narrative.

The concept of listening is also expressed with words like "hear," "obey," or "pay attention." Listening is not just hearing words. It is active. It requires focusing, processing, and responding in an appropriate way.

When it comes to prayer, the author of our Ecclesiastes passage expresses three ways we should approach God: draw near to listen, don't sacrifice like a fool with rash or hasty words, And remember to honor God's position.

The invitation is to slow down and posture our hearts differently in contrast to the world's noise around us. This includes letting go of our agendas and approaching God to listen to him.

We don't need to impress or inform God with our words. Instead, we draw near so that we can be formed by him. A fool's arrogance rejects listening. In rejecting wisdom, a fool is unteachable, contentious, and self-destructive.

Approaching God with humility acknowledges that he is not like us. God is greater, wiser, and fully aware. When, or if, we can grasp this truth, then our words will naturally become fewer and more meaningful.

These suggestions don't negate our need to approach God with our laments or needs. They lead us to simple, honest prayers that hold more weight than a dump truck full of empty words.

As we approach God today and every day, may we pause before we speak. Welcome the stillness. Allow our hearts to settle. And if words come, let them be honest and unhurried.

**Prayer: Lord, thank you for your presence that welcomes my silence and listening heart. Speak to me today as I open my ears to listen.**

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