

COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Spring 2025 - Stand alone sermon - "Listen to God"

Monday, Feb. 24 - Sunday, Mar. 2 (Week 4)

EMPHASIS FOR THE MONTH: **Building Relationships.** This month, we are focusing on deepening the relationships within our groups. Strong community is built on intentional connection and taking the time to truly know and care for one another. Whether through eating together, thoughtful questions, or simply creating space for honest conversation, I want to encourage you to invest in the bonds that make our groups a place of belonging and growth. Relationships take time to develop, but every small step toward deeper connection strengthens the foundation of our groups. Let's be intentional, lead with care, and cultivate a culture of trust. I'd love to hear how it's going! Please share any wins or creative ideas!

ICE BREAKER: If you were a farmer, what kind of crop would you grow and why?

CAB ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. This past Sunday we highlighted our volunteer teams at Step Up Sunday. If you would like to find a team to serve with, contact our Connections Director, Jackie Levesque:
jackie.levesque@churchatbergen.org
2. We hope you will join us every Tuesday evening at 6:30 PM for our weekly corporate prayer gathering.
3. Join the Prime Timers (50+) for a Pizza Outing! Come enjoy an evening of great food and fellowship at Mangiamo Pizza Restaurant in Paramus on Saturday, March 22, at 6 PM. For \$25 per person (cash only), you'll get pizza, salad, and pitchers of soft drinks. Sign up by emailing info@churchatbergen.org by Wednesday, March 19. Questions? Contact Keith and Elisa Mandra at: kem777@optonline.net
4. On Sunday, March 9th directly after the morning gathering, there will be a baptism class for any and all interested in being baptized. This is not necessarily a commitment but a great way to learn more about what baptism is and means and how we practice it here at Church at Bergen. Please email Pastor Dave if you are interested in attending: dave.levesque@churchatbergen.org
5. All men are invited to join us for a Men's Breakfast this upcoming Saturday, March 1st at 9 AM at church. No sign up required.

PRAYER FOR DISCUSSION: Leader or Co-Leader prays for the discussion time. Pray that the The Holy Spirit would assist in the conversing, processing, and listening of the discussion.

SERMON DISCUSSION TIME: Have someone read the passage: Mark 4:3-20, and then read this sermon summary to jog everyone's memory:

In Pastor Peter Ochoa's sermon, he emphasizes the importance of truly hearing and accepting God's Word as illustrated in the parable of the sower from Mark chapter four. He points out that listening to God is a profound act that goes beyond mere attendance at church; it requires genuine engagement with the message of the Gospel. Pastor Peter warns about the perils of hard-heartedness, superficial joy, and distractions in our lives that can choke out the truth of God's Word, drawing parallels to different types of soil that represent people's



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responses to the Gospel. As he explains the parable, Pastor Peter describes four types of listeners: those who fail to hear due to hardened hearts, those who respond joyously but are not rooted when trials come, those consumed by worldly desires, and finally, the good soil that produces fruit when one hears and accepts God's Word. He challenged us to reflect on our relationship with God, encouraging us to receive the Gospel deeply and continually so that our lives can bear spiritual fruit. The sermon concluded with an invitation to embrace Jesus wholeheartedly, assuring that genuine acceptance of the Gospel can lead to a life transformed and fruitful for His Kingdom.

Understanding the Parable

- What are the four types of soil mentioned in the parable of the sower, and what do they represent in our spiritual lives?
 - **The Path** - This soil represents a hard heart where the Word of God is heard but does not penetrate. Satan quickly snatches away the Word before it can take root. This is likened to those who hear the gospel but are indifferent or dismissive, allowing distractions or disbelief to prevent any spiritual growth.
 - **The Rocky Soil** - This soil represents those who receive the Word with joy initially, but their faith is shallow and lacks depth. When trials, tribulations, or persecution arise, they quickly fall away because their faith is not deeply rooted. This reflects a superficial acceptance of the gospel that does not endure hardship.
 - **The Thorny Soil** - This soil represents those who hear the Word but are choked by the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire for other things. These distractions prevent the Word from bearing fruit in their lives. It illustrates a divided heart where worldly concerns overshadow spiritual growth.
 - **The Good Soil** - This soil represents those who hear the Word, accept it, and bear fruit. Their faith is genuine and produces a harvest of righteousness, growing and multiplying in their lives. This is the ideal response, where the Word of God transforms the heart and leads to spiritual maturity and fruitfulness.
- Application: Reflect on your current spiritual state. Which type of soil do you think best represents your heart right now, and why?

The Importance of Listening

- The sermon emphasizes the importance of listening to God. How do you differentiate between simply hearing and truly listening to God's Word?
- Application: What practical steps can you take this week to improve your ability to listen to God's voice in your daily life?



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The Danger of Distractions

- Discuss how distractions and the "noise" of the world can prevent us from truly hearing God. What are some common distractions you face?

Joy and Trials

- The sermon mentions that joy alone is not enough for salvation. How do trials and tribulations test the authenticity of our faith?
- Application: Share a time when you faced a trial that tested your faith. How did you respond, and what did you learn from that experience?

The Deceitfulness of Riches

- How can the pursuit of wealth and worldly desires choke our spiritual growth, as described in the thorny soil?
- Application: What is one area of your life where you feel the pull of worldly desires? How can you refocus that area to align more closely with God's will?

PRAY TOGETHER: Spend time taking **and recording** prayer requests and then pray together as a group (*I strongly encourage you to send out the prayer requests weekly to your group to keep everyone informed and in the loop on how to pray for one another throughout the week. This also makes it easier to check-in with people who have shared requests to see how the Lord has been working in their lives*).

