

Listening

DISCERNMENT

Péng·yǒu
朋 友

FRIENDSHIP



SUMMER 2024



FAMILY

LISTENING
FOR GOD



Listen

verb

1 to give attention with the ear; attend closely for the purpose of hearing; give ear.

2 to pay attention; heed; obey (often followed by to)

Paying attention. This is something I sometimes find hard to do. As a teacher, I need to focus on each student when they are sharing. I need to watch interactions and respond with questions that lead them deeper in their understanding. Instead of tuning in, at the end of a day in the classroom I often feel exhausted and ready to tune out. This is one reason that I am grateful for a God who “shouts” at me to catch my attention.

Discernment is an aspect of the sanctified life of the Christian that I consider one of its greatest gifts. I am comforted in knowing that God guides me. Part of the guidance is to know that, like Jonah, he’ll chase after me and make it clear when I’ve misunderstood or chosen to ignore his guidance. I’m in the midst of that correction right now. It’s funny that last month one of my dear friends and long-time partner in ministry, asked me whether I was continuing my Bible reading with the Mandarin-speaking women that I’ve been reading with since 2018. In my own discernment process, I had felt this was something that I needed to let go of since I was taking up the opportunity to teach ~600 students the Bible this year. I should have known that my friends nudge was a foretaste of God’s shouting at me to take this back up again. In January, two of the women reached out to me separately to tell me how God has been seeking them out and their desire to continue reading the Bible with me. Next week I’ll be restarting Bible reading with them. I am curious to see how God has been active in their lives and how God will use this time to draw them closer to him and, very likely, connect with others that I don’t even know about yet. Praise God for his faithfulness even when we seek to be discerning and sometimes drop things he wants us to hold onto!

James 1:5 (NASB):

*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God,
who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*

朋友

The older I get, the more I value friendship. The reality is that I am a terrible friend. I don’t do well in keeping in touch with people as regularly as I ought to. I am perhaps too focused on my immediate community, but I have many friends who live in other countries and regions. Even though I care for them deeply and pray for their wellbeing, I don’t share that affection directly towards them very often. So, it is a great blessing when a friend comes

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to visit Hong Kong and that relationship is nurtured. Recently, a friend visited from Korea. Her family used to serve in God's mission with us in Hong Kong. We miss them terribly, and it was wonderful to host her for an evening gathering at our home as she traveled through. At such a moment it feels funny to ask for help, but that is exactly what I did. As a native Mandarin speaker and musician, my friend was well-qualified to meet a ministry need that I had. Our family has been asked to sing encouraging Christian songs for an annual ministry event that supports very low-income and homeless residents of a district in Hong Kong. I had only to mention the theme of the day and my friend burst out in song with motions that our family can now share with the community in Hong Kong this weekend. Praise God for friends and their heart to share generously with others in God's mission!



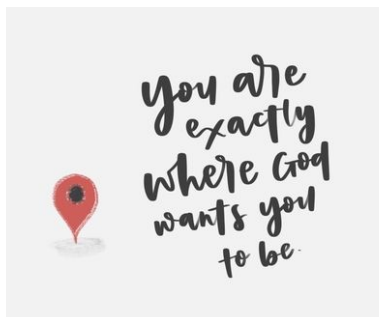
Thank you for your prayers for Eliada's travel at Christmas! It was wonderful to have our whole family together again, and Eliada enjoyed being back in Asia. She is now back at university in Saint Louis and working towards her final 12 months of college.

Baptism

We thank God for two more baptisms in January - a brother and sister - both primary-school students. We are so grateful to be witnesses of God at work in the lives of people in Hong Kong!

Summer 2024

Travel has been unpredictable for us since 2020 when COVID first impacted this region and then the world. Thankfully we are past that now. However, we find that our travel this summer is impacted by the happy event of a high school graduation and university plans. We still don't know where our second child will decide to head to university, and the delays in FAFSA processing is causing some challenges for our planning. I hope to have at least two Sundays this summer to connect with areas I wasn't able to visit last summer. If you are hoping for me to visit this year, please let me know!



Prayers

- Gratitude for Jonathan, currently nurturing faith and planting seeds across the border.
- Thanksgiving for Eliada's safe travel to Hong Kong to spend Christmas with us. Praise God for his work in her life to sustain her and protect her.
- For all my students this year who hear the Gospel and hear that Jesus loves them, that this truth would bear fruit in their lives.
- For discernment in finalizing the college decision for next year and for God to put all things into place to make those plans work.
- For the faith and baptism of D and N, that others may see the light of Christ in their life and seek the truth of God's love for them.
- Discernment for LCMS leaders in seeking God's will for ministries worldwide.
- Prayers for the CWF team and the communities it serves and for the family trip with CWF in April.

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