

Listening Prayer: both an action and an attitude

The **action** of Listening Prayer is moving into a place of stillness, being receptive to the thoughts or images which come to mind and then **writing down** what, if anything, we have noticed (received).

The **attitude** of Listening Prayer is a state of mind whose heart intent is to seek the highest and best for all concerned. Most importantly, it includes a realization that it is highly unlikely that one's present thoughts on a particular issue are God's absolute highest and best.

This realization has the effect in us of not only letting go and letting God, but more, letting go and letting God do the letting – or, being a Living Prayer.

Consensus in CFO

A process by which groups reach a decision through listening prayer in such a way that each person is fully invested in that decision.







1 Listening Together

- Establish the need. Ex: Selecting a Leader or Board Member.
- Establish the criteria. What skills/abilities do we want? What do we know?
- Center silently in God who is Love.
- Let go of previous ideas, opinions, judgments, questions by writing them down or sharing them and then ask for God's ideas.
- Be receptive, willing to accept what comes to mind. If nothing comes to mind, accept that.
- Write down what comes to you in the quiet.
- Each person shares what he/she has written. Have someone record the sharing.
- Listen to one another intently. Do not discuss. Receive what each person says without comment.

2 Reaching Consensus

- If there is agreement, rejoice
- If there is no agreement, rejoice and ...
 - a. Review the criteria (do not discuss personalities, issues or feelings. Make any changes to the criteria that you agree upon as a group.
 - b. Repeat steps 3-9.
- If all but one or two are in agreement, ask if they would be willing to support the agreement (even if they are not in agreement).
- If there is no agreement, set the matter aside for the time being. Return to it afresh at a later time, all earnestly seeking to do God's will.

3 Tools for Facilitating the Decision Process ...

- Use Colored Cards or Your Thumbs to indicate visually your response to the question. The value of this is that the facilitator and the group know immediately when agreement is reached or a problem has arisen. It also calls upon each participant to be a part of the decision and reduces superfluous talk.
 - To indicate "Yes... I can agree or support"  Hold up Yellow Card or Thumb Up 
 - To indicate "I need clarification or to make a comment"  Hold up Green Card or Thumb to Side 
 - To indicate "No...I can not agree or support"  Hold up Red Card or Thumb Down 

- If all the cards are Yellow or Thumbs Up – Rejoice – decide what needs to be done and who will do it.
- If there are Green Cards or Thumbs to the side – Rejoice – listen to questions or comments to identify issues and clarify the proposal.
- If there are Red Cards or Thumbs Down – Rejoice – ask the person(s) if they have experience or information that others don't have? With which part of the proposal does this person disagree? Does the proposal need restating or rephrasing? Remember that sometimes the red card will be just what is needed to direct the group towards a new position.



RESULTS of Listening Prayer Consensus Decision Making

- a Camp where each Council Ring member is fully supportive of each decision. This allows all energy to be focused on serving campers and creating the CFO experience.
- a Camp in which the Council Ring is in harmony and therefore the entire camp flows in harmony.
- a Camp in which the presence of God might be experienced by all.

REMINDERS for Success

- Listening prayer is the heart and soul of consensus. As we practice it our listening skills improve.
- The Consensus method must be taught by leaders who understand, value and practice it.
- For Council Rings learning the consensus process, we recommend that each member have a copy of these suggested steps and that the group practice together step by step.

a valuable tool for CFO'ers

CONSENSUS Requires

- A facilitator for the process.
- Commitment of each person to:
 - a) listen with care and openness
 - b) report what was received
- Commitment by the entire group to the process of listening together for God's Plan
- More time and perhaps more openness than any other method of decision making while the group is learning.
 - a) with group commitment, the time needed for listening and sharing may gradually decrease
 - b) since greater and more frequent sharing is required, each person, in order to be fully a part of each decision, will learn to be more present with him/her self and the group. Sharing is vital to this process.
 - c) as we participate in the process, we learn to identify and share what is received in the listening time.
- Practice. As a Council Ring practices these skills; love, unity, and openness increase and consensus is reached with greater ease and effectiveness.
- Appreciation of each person's uniqueness in new and greater ways. Our relationships (with those with whom God has called us to pray and listen) will be deepened as we work together. Our goal is to let go of our present opinions and beliefs and ask God for the highest and best for all.

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Consensus Decision Making*