



Benedictine Bits

Listening



“Listen” is the first word in *The Rule of St. Benedict* and is often paired with the phrase “Listen...with the ear of your heart.” How do we listen with our heart? This type of listening draws us into not only hearing but feeling what is being said. Benedict invites us to hear keenly and sensitively to the voices of all persons and all of creation. Listening in a Benedictine manner requires us to open our hearts and to be attentive to another’s perspective. Listening well requires patience, thought, and empathy. If we can better understand and share our neighbor’s struggles and joys, we are able to grow in relationship and ultimately community. In her book, *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily*, Sister Joan Chittister states “it takes a lot of listening to hear the needs of those around us before they even speak them. But there is no good human community without it. Listening and love are clearly of a piece.”