



LISTEN UP!

When we listen well, we improve communication and show how much we value one another.

Can you hear me now?

Cell phones are not our only communication problems. We find dead spots all the time. "Yes, we are meeting the Smiths for dinner Saturday; we talked about it last night." "Remember? I told you I was stopping at the library on the way home." "Oh, I forgot. Grandma wanted you to call her back."

We buy new organizers and family calendars. We leave notes on the fridge. We text and instant message each other, but we still have gaps in understanding. What's the real problem with communication in our families?

We are bombarded with information. In our twenty-first century information-overload, sometimes we just can't keep track of it all.

We don't take time to actively listen. We assume we have heard it before (and maybe we are right), and we are distracted with other activities.

We fail to value the role of communication as a vital building block in relationships.

***How can we improve?
Try these three ideas.***

- Identify the primetime for communication with your family member. It could be on the way home from school when your student needs to decompress, early in the morning when minds are fresh, or after dinner when people are happy and fed. Know the rhythms of your household and maximize that time.
- Give someone the gift of your undivided attention. Look him in the eye as he talks. Don't make her compete with the newspaper or the television.
- Improve your communication by summarizing and restating what your family member or friend told you. "So you felt the presentation went well." "You were disappointed that your friend didn't pick up on your hurt feelings."

The apostle Paul asked Timothy to consider his words, and then he asked the Lord to help him understand them (2 Timothy 2:7). That may be your prayer too!