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## ARTICLE

### Session 7: The People We Serve

#### PREPARATION

Read Scripture and background information. Reflect on the questions in the participant's book. Review links suggested in the lesson outline below.

#### Train of Thought

Leaders create an environment for learning that empowers the church to meet the challenges of changing paradigms while holding firmly to the mission and vision of the church.

#### Desired Outcomes

As a result of this session, participants should be able to:

- Understand that we serve people, both within the institutional church and out in the community and world.
- Recognize that listening is basic to serving the needs of others.
- Commit to a standard of quality that signifies to the world that Christian discipleship makes a difference.

#### Lesson Supplies

- [Posters](#)
- Worship center, candle, matches
- Copies of "[Levels of Quality](#)" handout

#### EXPLORATION AT GROUP SESSION

*Total time: 50 minutes*

Light the worship candle with these words: "This session reminds us of the importance of listening for God's directions. Let's sit quietly to open ourselves to God's Presence. Focusing attention on your breathing helps keep away distracting thoughts." After 2 minutes of silence (time it!), say, "Amen." Ask participants to share insights or questions from their preparation.

#### Bible Study Focus Verses: Acts 5:17-42

Divide the group into thirds and ask each group to work on one of the following questions for five minutes.

- What does this passage tell us about God?
- What does this passage tell us about men and women?
- What does this passage tell us about the relationship between God and human beings?

Have each small group share its findings with the total group.

#### Transition to Our Time

In verse 29, Peter and the disciples say, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." How does this verse shape the way we listen today? Follow the directions in "A Reflective Moment Along the Way" on page 61 to work in small groups and discuss how groups in your congregation operate.

[Click here](#) for suggestions for leading congregational committee meetings.

Lead participants in reflecting on the "Five Levels of Listening" chart on page 62 of the *FaithQuest* Bible Study. Begin by asking the group where each listening level occurs in the congregation. Work on each level, listing the responses on a dry-erase board or newsprint.

Your *FaithQuest* team may decide to seek additional training in order to listen better to the people both inside and outside the congregation. The *FaithQuest* team may want to sponsor an event with a communications specialist for the congregation.

Communication Links:

- "[Listening Skills: How to Recognize and Repeat Them](#)" by Katie Davis can help you practice and teach listening skills.
- The International Listening Association (<http://www.listen.org>) has some interesting material on effective listening.

## **DISCOVERY – APPLYING IDEAS TO THE CONGREGATION**

*Total time: 45 minutes*

### **Discussion Questions** (30 minutes)

Distribute copies of the "Levels of Quality" handout. Talk about questions for discussion on page 65 in the participant's book.

The Discovery Exercise on page 65 pushes the group to think about all the people the congregation serves. During this group session, focus on questions in the last 2 paragraphs of the exercise.

A scriptural example of listening to the people:

Acts 6:1-7 illustrates the concept of listening to the people we serve.

A conflict between two groups was brewing in the new Christian community. The twelve disciples (the leadership team at the time) called together the whole community. The leaders listened to the people, and they also brought the people together so they could listen to one another. The leaders realized the new movement called for specialized and focused leadership. The ministry of the deacon was established to oversee distribution of food and other service connecting Christian love to the needs of the world.

### **Feedback & Evaluation** (5 minutes)

Ask what we learned during the session. How have we experienced God's Presence?

### **Sending Forth** (10 minutes)

Share prayer concerns. Pray aloud together the prayer on page 59 of the participant's book.



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**BUILDING LEADERS FOR TODAY'S CHURCH**

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# **CUSTOMER**

## **EARLY/TRADITIONAL MEANING:**

**A person whose “custom” was to seek the work of a known, skilled guild person**

## **CONTEMPORARY MEANING:**

**The person or group receiving our service  
or the output of our processes**

**Jesus “customized” his relationships with people by:**

- **Focusing on the needs and wants of individuals**
- **Exceeding people’s expectations**
- **Taking time to get to know people**
- **Listening effectively**

# **LISTENING**

- **A skill critical for effective leadership.**
- **The way leaders know the needs of the people inside and outside the congregation.**
- **Deep listening is an act of caring, giving, loving, and healing.**
- **The basis of relationship.**

# **QUALITY**

## **The BEST available!**

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**SESSION 7**



## Levels of Quality

The left column on page 64 of the *FaithQuest Bible Study* introduces information about three levels of quality. Below are some illustrations:

### ASSUMED QUALITY

“must have”; “take it for granted”

#### Examples:

“I expect the airplane to take off, fly to my destination, and land safely.”

“I expect to get the correct blood for my blood transfusion.”

*When Level 1 quality is present, “customers” are satisfied but may not notice that they are satisfied. When Level 1 quality is absent, “customers” are not satisfied and often are surprised negatively.*

### DESIRED QUALITY

“satisfied”; “meets requirements”

#### Examples:

“I expect to arrive on time and have my luggage when I leave the airport.”

“I went to the hospital expecting to have my hernia repaired, to hurt some after it was done, to be released on the same day, and to receive the correct bill.”

*When Level 2 quality is present, customers are satisfied.*

*When Level 2 quality is not present, customers are less satisfied; and they often grumble.*

### UNEXPECTED QUALITY

“delightful”; “exciting”; “so good it attracts me to it”

#### Examples:

“They gave all the passengers in coach class the superior food service that other airlines provide for first class only.”

“All who were involved with me treated me with respect and explained things very carefully. But I was surprised when they called me the next day at home to see how I was doing.”

*When Level 3 quality is present, “customers” are very pleased and sometimes surprised at the good quality. Customers usually return to places where they receive Level 3 quality.*

*When Level 3 quality is absent, “customers” may not even notice.*