

# Gathering for Listening

## Chalice Lighting

We light this chalice to shine on our time together. In its light we celebrate the relationships and understanding we are creating in this place and time. May our sharing be deep.

## Introductions

Tell us about yourself in 4 or 5 sentences. Here are some possibilities.

I grew up in ...

I have been ... (teacher, parent, engineer, artist, caregiver, salesperson ...)

I am interested in ... (gardening, reading, social justice, painting, ... )

My family or support system ... (partner, children, friends )

In this covenant group I hope ...

## The Basket - Words of the Day

When I was truly listened to, I felt \_\_\_\_\_.

## Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support

## Business

## The Covenant

### I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group
- to let the facilitator know if I will be absent or need to quit
- to share responsibility for good process by watching how much time I take to speak, noticing what is going on for others, and considering problems if they occur
- to do the reading and thinking about the topic ahead of time
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, giving advice, or advocating a specific view
- to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn and to stay on the "I-message."

## Shared Readings

It is by speaking and listening to each other that out of the darkness of our separate mysteries is brought to light the truth of who we are. *Frederick Buechner*

There's something beyond technique when two or more people are deeply listening to each other. It is an awareness that not only are we present to each other, we are present to something that is spiritual, holy, sacred. *Kay Lindahl*

If we want to support each other's inner lives, we must remember a simple truth: the human soul does not want to be fixed, it wants simply to be seen and heard. *Parker J. Palmer*

Listen to yourself and in that quietude you might hear the voice of God. *Maya Angelou*

Most people need a few experiences of simply being listened to before they can really believe that just listening is enough. In time, we discover that to be listened to is a way of being loved, and that listening is a way of being loving. *Christine Robinson*

The greatest gift we can give another is our presence. *Thich Nhat Hanh*

Listening is such a simple act. It requires us to be present, and that takes practice, but we don't have to do anything else. We don't have to advise, or coach, or sound wise. We just have to be willing to sit there and listen. *Margaret J. Wheatley*

The first duty of love is to listen. *Paul Tillich*

I suspect that the most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention ... When people are talking, there's no need to do anything but receive them. *Rachel Naomi Remen*

Listening is about being present, not just about being quiet. *Krista Tippett*

## **Introducing the Process for Deep Sharing/Deep Listening**

**Rounds of Sharing.** There are two rounds of sharing. During each round, one person speaks at a time. Speakers share from the heart as deeply as they are willing, reflecting on the topic and their feelings, thoughts, and experiences. The job of listeners is to listen deeply, keeping their hearts open.

**Round 1.** Each person in the group takes about five minutes to reflect aloud on the topic and the preparation materials. The facilitator starts. Everyone who wants to speak gets one turn, in any order they choose. Anyone may pass. As each person finishes speaking, there are a few breaths of silence. Then the next person speaks.

**Round 2.** This is an opportunity to share additional reflections as well as thoughts about what others have shared. Speakers still focus on their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences and remain mindful of our commitment not to judge another's sharing, give advice, or advocate a position. Everyone who wants to speak gets a turn, and everyone is mindful of time so that each person has an opportunity to speak.

## **Deep Listening and Sharing**

**Round 1.** Share some reflections on listening and the preparation materials.

**Round 2.** As time allows, share additional thoughts or reflect on what others have shared.

## **Closing Circle**

## **Extinguishing the Chalice**

We extinguish this flame and we remember the warmth of our community, the light of our wisdom, the generosity of our sharing. We keep these in our heart until we meet again.

## **Song/Chime**

## **Announcements**