



Reflective listening

For use during the 100 Days of Listening

Travelling Well Together – Sustaining Ministry

Introduction

Taking time to listen to one another when we are talking about difficult subjects can be challenging. It is difficult to listen when our heart is stirred, and we want to tell other people what we think because we are worried we won't be listened to or our view won't be heard.

Joe Holland & Peter Henriot and John Stott offer two practical frameworks for discussing change, challenge and discernment together. The two models outlined below are not only designed to help us focus on one challenging discussion item at a time so that we can listen to one another, but importantly at the heart of each model is prayer, scripture, and reflection, to help us listen to God as we listen to one another.

Facilitation Tip: Begin with prayer, encourage curiosity rather than debate, and ensure every voice has an opportunity to be heard.



1. Holland & Henriot's Pastoral Spiral

A framework that begins with lived experience and helps a group move thoughtfully from reflection to action.

Experience "What is happening here?"	What are we seeing, feeling and experiencing?
Social Analysis "Why is this happening?"	What is really happening? What has caused this? What perspectives are present?
Faith Reflection "What does it mean in light of our faith?"	What insights come from prayer, Scripture and Christian wisdom?
Action "How should we respond?"	What is God calling us to do next? What is our next step?

Useful questions for PCCs, ministry teams and parish gatherings

What challenge are we facing?

- Whose voices need to be heard?
- What assumptions are we making?
- What is God saying to us?
- What small next step can we take?

Holland & Henriot's model is helpful when a parish needs to understand its own experience before deciding on future action.



2. John Stott's Double Listening

A framework that helps the church listen carefully both to God's Word and to the world around it.

Listen to Scripture ↔ Listen to the Community and Culture

The goal is to bring faithfulness to the gospel together with sensitivity to the realities people are facing.

Useful questions for PCCs, ministry teams and parish gatherings

- What is happening in our wider community?
- What are people worried about or longing for?
- What biblical themes speak into this situation?
- How does the gospel address these concerns?
- What faithful response is needed?

Stott's model is helpful when considering mission, outreach, community relationships, changing social realities or opportunities for engagement.

Which Model Should We Use?

Situation	Pastoral Spiral	Double Listening
Internal parish challenge	Excellent	Helpful
Community and mission questions	Helpful	Excellent