

Responsibility in Hearing God's Word

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There is a responsibility on the part of the hearers of God's word to take heed how they hear! We often emphasize the importance of the speaker and his work is important. But it is just as important that the one's listening do their part well. We do not assemble together just to be entertained. Are you fulfilling your responsibility as a hearer? In reading chapter eight of the book of Nehemiah we learn from a group of people who were good listeners, how to hear God's Word. There are several criteria listed:

1. They heard intellectually! Verse 2 read, So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the congregation, of men and women and all who could hear with understanding..." The next verse again mentions this fact speaking of "those who could understand". The religion of Jesus Christ is the one of intellect. It is rational. Paul told the Ephesians that, "when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" ([Eph. 3:4](#)). We must put our minds into gear then we hear God's Word.

2. They heard attentively! Verse 3 says, "the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law". Many times people pass notes, let their minds wonder on other things, talk, run to the restrooms or water fountain, etc. when they should be listening to the Word of God. It is obvious they are not attentive to their hearing! Could this be you?

3. They heard respectfully! Note verse 5 where "all the people stood up" when Ezra opened the book. Verse 6 says, Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. Then all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen!' These things show respect in the traditions of their day. Often people are not respectful when one is trying to teach them and thus show disrespect for the teacher and the Word of God. One cannot learn if he is not respectful.

4. They heard emotionally! Verse 9 says they "wept" and verse 12 says they greatly rejoiced". They were listening to the Word with all their heart! They were not letting their emotions guide them but the things Ezra was saying guided their emotions. When they heard God's Word they appropriately wept and rejoiced, depending on the content of God's Word. Are your emotions involved in your hearing of the word of God? Do you put your heart into it?

5. They heard conformably! Verse 13 to the end of the chapter shows their keeping the Feast of the Tabernacle because of their hearing the word of the Law. They responded to what was being said. They acted upon it and obeyed it. What good is hearing the Word if we do not obey it? We must hear with a view of conforming our lives to it. Is this you?