

**Confidentiality:**

- The content shared in the group is private and sometimes vulnerable.
- We offer safety and care to each individual sharing by committing to keep what is shared private.

**Listening - Attentive and Attuned:**

- Give respect and value to each individual by listening attentively.
- Give eye contact.
- Questions to think about while listening...
  - What significant things do you hear the student sharing?
  - What joys, hurts, hopes, and discouragements did the sharer experience?
- Empathic Listening - "Communicating accurate understanding of another's feelings, thoughts and/or experiences."
  - Imagine yourself in the sharer's circumstances, thoughts, and emotions.
  - Allow your heart to be impacted by the student's story - give yourself permission to feel the weight of what they share.

**Reflection:** Sit in silence for a moment before you respond to the person who shared.

1. Sit with the weight of things the person shared...
2. What emotions and circumstances do you hear from the person who shared?
3. What does the Holy Spirit bring to mind as you reflect on what the person shared?
4. Are there images, scriptures, words that come to mind that would encourage the sharer?
5. What is something empathetic and encouraging you can reflect back to the sharer?

**Responding and Encouraging:**

- Be intentional to focus on the sharer.
- Share what the Holy Spirit impressed upon you during silence or while the person was sharing.
- Jesus was often moved with compassion... imagine His response to the sharer.

- Sometimes hearing another person's story reminds us of things in our own life. When we relate to another person's story or experience, we can become tempted to share our story. It's important to avoid the temptation to share our own experiences or stories during another's time, because it devalues the sharer and can turn the group's attention away from the sharer and towards ourselves.
- Do not be prescriptive with your encouragements.
- Give compassion, not advice.
- Don't try to fix the person sharing. When we are uncomfortable with another person's grief, tears, struggle, etc., we may try to relieve our own discomfort by trying to fix or give advice.
- Sometimes the greatest gift of compassion we can give another person is our presence and empathy.
- Share what you see God doing in the student's life. How is it encouraging or uplifting?
- In what way is God growing/sanctifying the sharer?
- What characteristics, virtues, or fruits of the Spirit is God cultivating through the experiences the person shares? (Paul would often encourage churches at the beginning of his letters.)
- How may God want to use these things the person shares for His kingdom? Affirm God's work and presence in the sharer's circumstances and life.