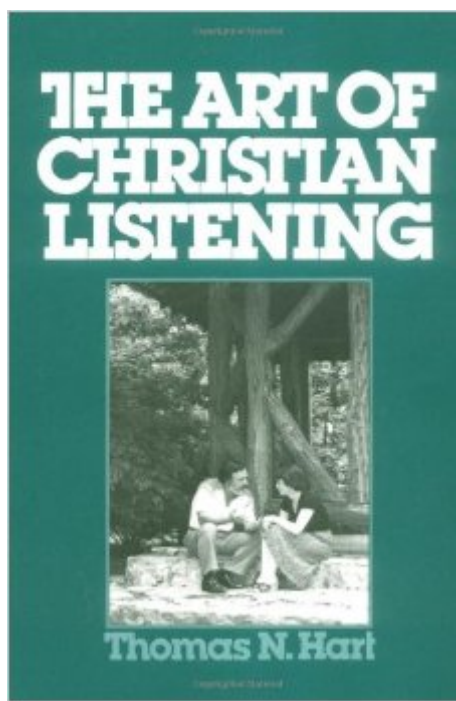


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# The Art Of Christian Listening



## Synopsis

A book grounded in the Bible, contemporary spiritual theology and the insights of modern psychology, written as a guide for anyone who is required to assist others in human growth.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (19 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Books about ministry seem to come and go. Titles will appear that deal with issues of modern life, will have a novel and often interesting approach, but quickly grow old. This is not due to the content. It is usually sound, but techniques and styles change over time and certain practices can become outdated. One book about ministry that never seems to age and if anything, develops a new following year after year is Thomas Hart's THE ART OF CHRISTIAN LISTENING. For Hart, the key word in the title is listening. His book does not offer advice on how to counsel people, what advice to give, or how to solve a person's problems. He also does not provide psychological solutions to problems with a Christian slant though the work is psychologically credible and spiritually sound. Rather, he trains and challenges the reader to listen to where people are coming from as Jesus did, providing a consoling and caring experience where true growth can develop. The book is easy to use. Hart writes in a manner that will help the person who is just beginning ministry and challenge those who have been doing spiritual direction or counseling for some time. He provides discussion questions at the end of each chapter that encourages both reflection and discussion which makes it the perfect book to be used in a group setting. It's also a book that can be read over and over again and the reader can gain fresh insights. I first read the book when it was somewhat new and was "all the rage." I was in college and people were reading it and discussing it. Priests and pastoral

ministers were singing its praises. Teachers were using it to better listen to colleagues and students. We all had the same experiences from reading it.

Over the past few years I have read a number of books on the topic of spiritual direction and "Christian listening." The Art of Christian Listening was not on my "to read" list when it found me; it was electronically recommended to me through other books I had purchased from . I took a chance and purchased it which turned out to be a very good gamble. I think this little book ranks as one of the very best I have ever read on the discipline (art) and ministry of spiritual listening and direction. Hart describes the Christian listener as a helper and uses the first half of the book to describe the gentle, subservient, and very holy relationship the helper occupies in the ministry of "listening" to the soul of fellow sojourners. I dearly loved the beautifully uncomplicated descriptions of each facet of listening direction the helper must be attuned to. These details are covered in the first six chapters, highlighting the role of the spiritual director (aka Christian listener aka helper) as a sacrament described in spiritual orientation, counseling, spiritual formation, and prayer. This is definitely not a formulaic "how-to-by-following-these-steps" book; however, there are some excellent experiential wisdom and helpful pointers shared by Hart that can be very beneficial for directors and listeners in helping them to avoid "pitfalls." Now, as much as I enjoyed this book, there were some things I didn't care for. Hart references Carl Jung from beginning to end (Jung is known as the father of contemporary psychology). I don't have a strict aversion to the use of psychology in counseling, but some of the methods employed are suspect (in my opinion). Secondly, I am opposed to a couple of doctrinal positions that Hart promotes. He seems to follow the belief of Process Theology.

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