

16<sup>th</sup> September 2021

## Ears

**“Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.”**

*William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar*

I have a deficit in my hearing. I've worn hearing-aids for some time, but I've recently had to have them adjusted because of a further deterioration. To be honest, when I struggle with my hearing, I'd be happy to have *anyone* lend me their ears, whatever friends, Romans or countrymen they might be. A loss of hearing can be really debilitating.

When Jesus shared his parables with his followers, he often concluded by saying, “If you have ears to hear, then hear.” But this wasn't just about hearing the *words*. It was about meaning, truth, insight, all those important things that needed to be “heard” beyond the spoken word.

My recent book, *Whispers of Wisdom*, (see [www.ionabooks.com](http://www.ionabooks.com)) explores several aspects of grief, loss and bereavement. It contains a chapter entitled “Is anybody listening?” which looks at listening “beyond words” to what a person really feels in their loss. For the conclusion of the chapter, I wrote this reflection. I offer it to you here without further explanation. If you have ears to hear, you'll hear well enough ...

*I listened with my ears; it's what you do with ears;  
it's what they were made for, and someone was speaking.  
So, I listened with my ears, in case there was something important to hear.*

*I listened with my eyes; you can do that with eyes;  
they can see things people say, when words aren't enough.  
So, I listened with my eyes, in case there was something important to heed.*

*I listened with my mind; you can think when you're listening,  
about “Whys” and “Hows”, as you try to understand.  
So, I listened with my mind, in case there was something important to grasp.*

*I listened with my experience; “empathy” the say it's called.  
I tried hard to find a way to get behind what was being shared.  
So, I listened with my experience, in case there was something important to feel.*

*I listened with my ears, and my eyes, and my mind, and my experience,  
and I began to hear, and heed, and grasp, and feel an unfolding story.  
I listened ... and I heard ... and I hadn't said anything yet.*

### **A prayer for today**

*Lord, help me to listen to you with all that I am. Amen*