



SKETCH

The Ancient Discipline of Listening

B is enthusiastic, perhaps slightly over so. B is limbering up and counting in ancient Greek – alpha, beta, alpha, beta (for 1, 2, 1, 2). A watches for a while.

A What are you doing?

B Remember last year? It was the year of discipleship, and this year is the year of effectiveness, and the root of discipleship is discipline, so... I've been working on the disciplines of the effective disciples...

A *(with some uncertainty)* Er – right.

B So that was me counting... in Greek. You see, they didn't have numbers exactly, so they used letters and I needed to learn Greek numbers so I could do the accounts. *(counting on fingers)* Alpha, beta, gamma, delta...

A Do the accounts?

B Yes. You see, Levi *(that's Matthew the disciple)* was a tax collector, so he needed to count money, and Judas Iscariot – he kept the accounts for Jesus and his followers.

A Right, so why were you...?

B And I've learnt fishing. A lot of Jesus' disciples were fishermen, so I've been on a weekend course of fly fishing.

A Fishing for flies?

B No, silly! Fishing with flies.

(A, not understanding, looks at audience and shrugs)

B As well as fishing I've learnt sword fighting because Peter was quite good at that. I haven't tried cutting anyone's ear off yet, but I can take the head off a dandelion! *(demonstrates a sword swish)*

A Is that what the exercises are for?

B Oh NO! I got all those ideas from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, but now I'm working through Acts, and it turns out Philip... was a runner! So I'm taking up jogging.

A Philip was a runner?

B Yes. He had to run to keep up with a chariot containing an important Ethiopian, so I'm getting in training.

A Right. It all makes sense now! *(a little sarcastically)*

B I've got it all written down here *(holds up piece of paper and gives it to A)* – everything I need to learn.

- A** *(looking at paper)* I see, now. *(During this B ignores A and continues to train and talk to themself)* You want to be a disciple and you've been focusing on what they did – fishing, counting money, running – but forgetting what they did – watching Jesus, asking questions and listening to the answers. I think you're missing something. *(Realises B is not listening, raises voice)* I think you're missing something.
- B** What?
- A** You're missing something.
- B** Am I? *(looking round)* What? Better trainers? Sandals? Better sandals? They wore sandals, didn't they?
- A** No!
- B** They didn't wear sandals? I thought they did.
- A** STOP! That's not the problem. The problem is that you're missing something. You're missing a discipline. You need to listen.
- B** Listen?
- A** To God.
- B** Listen to God?
- A** That's what I said. Try this. Take this piece of paper like this *(A helps B roll the piece of paper round into a kind of tube or cone)*. Now put it by your ear. *(speaking down the tube)* Can you hear me?
- B** Loud and clear!
- A** That's the idea! If you want to know what Jesus wants, you need to listen.
- B** Pardon?
- A** Seriously?
- B** Only joking – message received – loud and clear!

If this sketch is too long, you could try shortening the ending.