

## Listening to Listeners: Homiletical Case Studies Channels of Listening series


By Dr. Ronald J. Allen, Prof. Dale P. Andrews




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Many preachers long to understand the dynamics of thought, feeling, and behavior at work in congregations. They use many techniques to evaluate the needs of their congregation and to sharpen their sermons, but preachers seldom give members of their congregation the opportunities to identify qualities of preaching that motivate them to engage sermons, and qualities of sermons that prompt disengagement. This book draws on one of the first large scale attempts in North America to do just that. Drawing on extensive interviews and analysis based on traditional rhetorical categories derived from Aristotle-the listener's perception of the character, personality and trustworthiness of the preacher (ethos), the appeals to reason in the content of the sermon (logos), and the role of feeling in the event of preaching (pathos)-the authors present case illustrations to help preachers listen pastorally to their own parishioners, to understand how their listeners' participation in the sermon is affected by the ethos, logos, and pathos, and how the pastor can use this understanding to preach in ways that engage listeners. Pastors are encouraged to compare and contrast their own perceptions of preaching with those expressed by their parishioners and to reflect more broadly and deeply about preaching in the preacher's own congregational setting.

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#### Review

"Good sermons express passions that help listeners care, convey concerns that invite listener involvement, communicate life and faith in ways that ring true, and embody these gifts as a communication of the word of God that can become words of life. This book introduces preachers to the essential tools of effective communication, demonstrates how to identify their effect in the talk of listeners, and then sends preachers out to become ethnographers of effective communication for their own congregations. Listening to Listeners is the rare book that provides preachers and students with real talk about how listeners experience a ministry of preaching as part of their own faith formation. If you long for more than 'Good sermon, pastor' and a handshake, this is the book of the real conversations preachers have been hungry to hear."

#### About the Author

**G. Lee Ramsey, Jr.**, is Associate Professor of Pastoral Care at Memphis Theological Seminary

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**Ronald J. Allen** is Nettie Sweeney and Hugh Th. Miller Professor of Preaching and New Testament at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. He is author of many books, including Patterns of Preaching and Interpreting the Gospel, and coauthor of One Gospel, Many Ears and Listening to Listeners, all from Chalice Press.

**Dan Moseley** is a writer, preacher, congregational consultant/coach and Herald B. Monroe Professor of Practical Parish Minister emeritus. He has worked with congregations in transition as they moved into new directions and leadership. He has also helped congregations develop strategies for planning and growing their future. Dan has served as pastor in four congregations for over 30 years and has been a Professor at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis for 12 years. His focus has been on preaching and congregational leadership. He has published numerous articles and sermons

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