

I came across the following in my Bible study software and thought it was very pertinent to our community at this time:

“Listening is not just passive hearing. It is an active participating experience in which you pay genuine attention to what the other person is saying. Here are some principles that should help you become a better listener:

- 1. Don't grab the conversation: “Yes, now take me, for instance ...”*
- 2. Don't let your gaze wander from the other person's face except momentarily.*
- 3. Validate the feelings of the other: “Yes, I see what you mean.”*
- 4. Don't interrupt.*
- 5. Don't try to top the other person's story or joke.*
- 6. Don't criticize.*
- 7. Ask appropriate questions: “What happened then?” or “How did you feel?”*
- 8. Don't argue.”*

[Michael P. Green, 1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 223.]

Allow me to add to this list:

9. Listen to understand, not looking for your opening to respond.
10. Listen to ALL of the information before formulating a response/opinion.

As a community, we have some very important decisions to make regarding whether to go to a 4-day school week or not. I am NOT going to push a personal agenda here. Rather, I want to encourage everyone to begin by listening. This is way too important to let personal biases and feelings get in the way of community and relationships. And what a community we are. I have seen people come together ever since we moved here two and a half years ago. Granted, I do not have the history here that many of you have, but this I know: **Buffalo Center is a great place to live because of the people here.** Let us fight for those relationships and commit to listening in the spirit of love. Let us pray together and listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit. And so, I will leave you with this from the Word of God, 1 Corinthians 13:4-13...

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for

knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

To God be all glory, Amen.