

Community Group Study 1 Samuel 3:1–21

Making Room for God to Speak into Our Lives

Introduction

In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.” Eli is growing old, his sons have corrupted the priesthood, and Israel is spiritually weak. Yet the writer adds, “The lamp of God had not yet gone out.” The lamp was still burning in the sanctuary; in this dark setting, the detail also gives us hope. God has not abandoned His people.

Samuel is sleeping near the ark when God calls his name. He serves in the sanctuary, but verse 7 says that he does not yet know the LORD; the word of the LORD has not yet been revealed to him. Samuel must learn to recognize God’s voice. The question for us is whether we are becoming attentive enough to listen, humble enough to discern, and willing enough to obey.

Read 1 Samuel 3:1–21 together.

1 God Speaks Before We Know How to Listen

1 Samuel 3:1–10

God takes the initiative. He calls Samuel before Samuel knows how to recognize His voice. Grace begins with God. We cannot manufacture His presence or force Him to speak by becoming “spiritual enough.” We listen to the God who has revealed Himself through Scripture and supremely through Jesus Christ.

This should make us careful with the phrase “God told me.” Not every strong feeling or desire comes from God. What we believe He may be saying should be tested by Scripture, the character of Jesus, wise Christian community, and the fruit it produces. Samuel himself needed help to understand what was happening.

Discuss

1. What strikes you about the contrast between “the word of the LORD was rare” and “the lamp of God had not yet gone out”? What hope do you see here?
2. Samuel grew up serving in the sanctuary, yet verse 7 says he did not yet know the LORD. What is the difference between knowing about God and knowing Him personally?
3. Why should Christians be careful about saying “God told me”? How might we test what we believe God may be saying?

2 Learning to Listen

1 Samuel 3:8–10

Samuel eventually responds, “Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.” Listening is hard when phones, news, responsibilities, work, anxiety, and endless information fill our attention. These things are not necessarily wrong, but we can become so accustomed to noise that we leave little room to listen.

Samuel encounters God while doing the work already given to him. Sometimes we wait for dramatic direction while overlooking ordinary responsibilities. Calling often grows within everyday faithfulness: caring for family, working honestly, keeping promises, serving others, praying, and learning Scripture. God may not give us the entire map, but often He gives enough light for the next faithful step.

Discuss

4. What are the main sources of noise in your life? What might help you make more room to listen?
5. Have you known a time when God seemed silent? What did you learn?
6. Where might God already be asking you to be faithful while you wait for clearer direction?

3 Discernment Happens in Community

Samuel hears the voice, but Eli helps him understand it. There is irony here: Eli is not a perfect leader, and God's message will expose his failures. Yet God still uses him to guide Samuel. Discernment is seldom entirely private. We need Scripture, prayer, and the wisdom of others. Healthy spiritual guidance does not control another person's choices. It helps them listen, ask good questions, test what they hear, and recognize fruit over time.

Discuss

7. Who has helped you recognize something God might have been doing in your life?
8. How can a Christian community help someone discern God's direction without making the decision for them?

4 Hearing God Leads to Obedience

1 Samuel 3:11–21

The first message Samuel receives is painful news about Eli's household. Imagine speaking that word to the man who has cared for you. "Speak, LORD" is not a romantic prayer; it is surrender: "I am willing to hear even what I would rather not hear." Faithful people may still be afraid. Sometimes the next step is uncomfortable.

The chapter ends: "The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground." God calls; Samuel listens; Eli helps him discern; Samuel obeys; and in time the community recognizes the fruit. His calling becomes visible through faithfulness and character, not merely because he claims to have heard from God.

As a congregation seeking direction, we naturally want the whole plan. Who will lead us? What should we do next? What will our church become? Perhaps our first task is to pray together, listen to one another, test what we hear, and obey what God has already made clear.

Final reflection

9. Is there an area of your life where you know the next faithful step but have hesitated to take it?
10. If we prayed, "Speak, LORD, for your servants are listening," what might need to change in us personally and as a congregation?

Closing prayer

Share prayer requests. Pray for our congregation during this season of discernment—that we would listen well, discern together, and have courage to take the next faithful step.

小组查经 撒母耳记上 3:1-21

让神的话进入我们的生命

引言

“当那些日子，耶和华的言语稀少，不常有默示。”以利年纪渐长，他的儿子败坏了祭司的职分，以色列人的属灵光景也很软弱。然而，作者又补上一句：“神的灯还没有熄灭。”圣所里的灯仍然亮着。在这样的黑暗中，这个细节也给我们盼望：神并没有离弃祂的百姓。撒母耳睡在约柜附近，神呼唤他的名字。他在圣所里服事，但第7节说他那时还不认识耶和华，耶和华的话也还没有向他显明。撒母耳需要学习辨认神的声音。对我们来说，问题是：我们是否愿意安静下来聆听，谦卑地分辨，并且甘心顺服？

请大家一起读撒母耳记上 3:1-21。

一 在我们还不懂得聆听之前，神已经说话

撒母耳记上 3:1-10

是神先主动。撒母耳还不懂得辨认祂的声音，神就已经呼唤他。恩典是从神开始的。我们不能靠自己制造神的同在，也不能因为自己“够属灵”就迫使祂说话。我们聆听的，是那位已经借着圣经，并且最清楚地借着耶稣基督，向我们显明自己的神。

因此，我们说“神告诉我”时要谨慎。不是每一种强烈的感觉或愿望都来自神。我们认为神可能对我们说的话，需要用圣经、耶稣的品格、成熟基督徒群体的智慧，以及它所结出的果子来检验。连撒母耳也需要别人的帮助，才能明白正在发生什么事。

讨论

1. “耶和华的言语稀少”和“神的灯还没有熄灭”，这两句话放在一起，有什么触动你？你从中看见什么盼望？
2. 撒母耳从小在圣所里服事，第7节却说他还不认识耶和华。知道有关神的事，和亲自认识神，有什么不同？
3. 基督徒为什么要谨慎地说“神告诉我”？我们怎样检验自己认为神可能在说的话？

二 学习聆听

撒母耳记上 3:8-10

最后，撒母耳回应说：“耶和华啊，请说，仆人敬听。”当手机、新闻、家庭责任、工作、焦虑和源源不绝的信息占据我们的注意力，聆听就变得不容易。这些事情本身未必有错，但我们可能已经习惯了各种声音，以致没有给聆听留下多少空间。撒母耳是在做神已经交托给他的事时遇见神的。有时候，我们等待一个轰轰烈烈的指引，却忽略眼前平凡的责任。呼召往往是在日常的忠心中逐渐清晰起来的：照顾家人、诚实工作、守承诺、服事别人、祷告和学习圣经。神未必把整张地图交给我们，却常常赐下足够的光，让我们走出下一步。

讨论

4. 你的生活中，哪些声音最容易使你分心？你可以怎样多留一点空间来聆听？
5. 你曾经历过神似乎沉默的时期吗？那段时间你学到了什么？
6. 当你等待更清楚的方向时，神可能已经在哪些事情上呼召你忠心？

三 在群体中一起分辨

撒母耳听见声音，但以利帮助他明白发生了什么。这里有一点出人意料：以利并不是完美的领袖，神接下来要说的话还会揭露他家的失败。然而，神仍然使用他来引导撒母耳。分辨很少只是一个人的事。我们需要圣经、祷告，也需要别人的智慧。

健康的属灵引导，不会替别人作决定或控制别人的选择，而是帮助他们聆听、提出好的问题、检验所听见的，并且留意日后结出的果子。

讨论

7. 在你的生命中，谁曾帮助你看见神可能正在做的事？

8. 基督徒群体怎样帮助一个人分辨神的带领，同时又不替他作决定？

四 听见神的话，就要顺服

撒母耳记上 3:11–21

撒母耳领受的第一个信息，是关于以利一家的痛苦消息。想一想，要把这话告诉那位照顾过自己的人，会有多难。“耶和华啊，请说”不是一句浪漫的祷告，而是一种降服：“即使是我不愿意听的话，我也愿意听。”忠心的人仍可能害怕。有时候，下一步会使我们感到不自在。

这一章结尾说：“撒母耳长大了，耶和华与他同在，使他所说的话一句都不落空。”神呼唤，撒母耳聆听，以利帮助他分辨，撒母耳顺服；过了一段时间，众人也看见了结果。他的呼召因忠心和品格而显明，并非单凭他声称自己听见了神的声音。

作为一个正在寻求方向的教会，我们自然希望知道整张蓝图。谁来带领我们？下一步该怎么走？我们的教会将来会怎样？也许我们首先要做的，是一起祷告，彼此聆听，检验我们所听见的，并且顺服神已经清楚指示我们的事。

最后反思

9. 在你生命中，有没有一件事，你已经知道下一步该怎样忠心去做，却迟迟没有行动？

10. 如果我们祷告说：“耶和华啊，请说，仆人敬听”，我们个人和整个教会需要作出什么改变？

结束祷告

请分享代祷事项。为我们的教会在这段寻求方向的时期祷告，求神帮助我们好好聆听、一起分辨，并赐我们勇气，走出下一步。