



# Near and Now

*Called – Samuel*

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## Warm-up Question

*When have you heard a voice that you thought you recognized,  
but it was someone else?*



Photo by Sai De Silva on [Unsplash](#)

## Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

## Speak Lord, your servant is listening?

Read [1 Samuel 3:1-10](#)

### Bible Story Reflection

Sometimes it is hard to recognize God's voice in our lives. For most of us, God doesn't call out to us in extraordinary ways. Most of us have never had an angel show up on our doorstep with a life-changing, divine message. Most of us have never had a bush on fire tell us to take off our shoes for the ground around us is holy. Most of us don't have dreams that we can clearly understand as the voice of God. Because of this, we can find ourselves wondering what is the voice of the divine in our lives and what is the voice of something else.

In the story of the call of Samuel, we find that Samuel, too does not immediately recognize God's voice, and neither does Eli. When the boy Samuel hears a voice calling to him in the night, his first response is that it must be Eli, under whose tutelage he was serving. After all, who else would it be? When he inquires of Eli, and Eli sends him back to bed, neither of them consider that it is God whose voice Samuel is hearing. Finally, after three times, Eli discerns that it must be God who is calling to Samuel in the night, and he instructs the boy how to respond.

While this story is the account of God's particular call for one particular person, there are several gifts for our own lives that come to us through it. First, God is persistent. When Samuel does not immediately recognize God's voice, God does not give up. God doesn't give up on us, either. Out of love and mercy, God keeps calling, over and over again. Second, Samuel doesn't try to figure this out on his own. He goes to his trusted mentor. The life of faith is not a solo-journey: we, too, need beloved ones in the faith to help us figure out what God is up to in our lives, and to what God is calling us in our walk of faith. Finally, God uses Eli to help Samuel understand that it is God who is calling him. So it is with us. Oftentimes, the voice of God comes to us from other people in our lives, pointing us toward God's call, helping us hear, embrace, and respond to the movement of the divine in our lives. And, God uses us in the same way in the lives of others. God uses each of us to help others discern and respond to God's call in the everyday things and in the life-changing circumstances of that are a part of our lived-experience of the human story.

### Discussion Questions

1. How do you think Samuel would tell this story?
2. How do you think Eli would tell this story?
3. What makes it hard to recognize God's voice?
4. What other voices get in the way of you hearing God's voice?
5. What makes it difficult for you to respond to God, "speak Lord, your servant is listening?"
6. Talk about a time when someone helped you hear and understand God's call for your life?
7. Talk about a time when you helped someone else hear and understand God's call for their life?
8. What does it mean to you that God is persistent?
9. Who are some of the people who help you discern, embrace, and respond to God's call for your life?
10. The Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion are tangible ways that God calls to us. How can these Sacraments nourish you as you seek to recognize God's voice?
11. What is one way that you have heard God's call in the past week?

### **Activity Suggestions**

When you are taking a shower or bath or washing your hands, pray the following prayer: “I remember that through Holy Baptism, O God, you claimed and named me as your child. In my life today, speak Lord, for your servant is listening. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.”

Think of a family member or friend who could use a word of encouragement. Text them, call, them, or mail them a note that reminds them that they are a beloved child of God. God is with them in their joys and sorrows, and God calls out to them with love and mercy.

Talk to a trusted mentor in the faith, and ask them who they think God is calling you to be today and what God is calling you to do today.

### **Prayer Concerns**

Those who struggle to hear God’s voice, all young children, mentors in the faith

### **Closing Prayer**

Prayer: Call to me, O God, that I might be your faithful servant. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

