



Near and Now

When My Calling is Behind the Scenes – Jethro
By Vicar Paige McGrath

Warm-up Question

What does it feel like to give and receive advice from a loved one?



Photo by Kelly Sikkema 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?

I Will Give You Counsel

Read [Exodus 18:13-27](#)

Bible Story Reflection

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, takes on many roles behind the scenes: He cares for Moses' wife and sons. He travels with them, so that they may be reunited with Moses while he is in the wilderness with the Israelites. Jethro listens to Moses' story. He rejoices with Moses. He observes Moses' ministry and provides an outside perspective; Jethro validates the good that Moses is already doing *and* gives further instruction on how to improve his ministry – both for the sake of the people Moses serves *and* for the sake of Moses' own well-being.

Jethro demonstrates that callings that are behind the scenes are not necessarily callings without a voice. While much of Moses' story involved listening to *God's* voice, this part is about listening to *Jethro's* voice. In this moment, Jethro was called to be the wisdom behind Moses's ministry. Most people do not often hear about Jethro's ministry, advice, or wisdom; they just hear about the impact *Moses* made. However, this does not diminish the importance of Jethro's role in Moses' story, in the Israelites' story, or even his role in God's mission for God's people! God knows all and sees all, even those behind the scenes, like Jethro.

If your call is behind the scenes, let Jethro's story empower you to let your voice be heard. If your call is behind the scenes, you are called to be one who empowers center-stage leaders. You are called to share the work of ministry and to remind others, like Jethro reminded Moses, that one person is not meant to carry the heavy load alone. If your call is behind the scenes, remember that God sees your work, even when others do not.

If your call is *not* behind the scenes, may Jethro's story be your reminder to listen to the voices who *are* behind the scenes. If your call is center stage, you are called to recognize when you are doing too much; you are called to share the work of ministry. You are called to rejoice with those who support you, to delegate like Jethro instructed Moses to do, and to acknowledge when your wisdom comes from another – either the person who works behind the scenes or from God.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you relate more to Jethro or Moses in this story? Why?
2. From your own experience, what do you see as the joys and challenges of serving behind the scenes? Serving "center stage"?
3. How can those who serve behind the scenes and those who serve center stage better support each other and learn from one another?
4. How do you think Jethro would explain his role in Moses' ministry?
5. How do you think Moses would describe Jethro's influence on his leadership?
6. In what ways have you experienced listening as an act of love and service?

7. Sometimes others do not want to listen or follow the advice someone gives. What are some practical ways you can keep your peace when others do not hear your voice? What are some practical ways you can gently help others hear your (or another's) voice?
8. Part of delegating is letting go of control. What helps you let go of control over a project or task? How can you help others let go of control?

Activity Suggestions

Think of someone who has given you excellent advice. Write them a thank you letter for supporting you behind the scenes.

Take turns naming and validating the work of those in the group, especially how those who work behind the scenes have supported center-stage leaders and how those who work center stage have uplifted those behind the scenes. Give examples of how they support each other well.

Make a list of three people in your life who currently fulfill behind-the-scenes roles that provide you or others support. The next time you see these three people tell them that you see them and thank them for their important work.

Prayer Concerns

Those who feel unseen and underappreciated, those without the support of a loving family, and all who give and seek advice, including ministers, lawyers, and counselors and the people they serve.

Closing Prayer

Help me to know, O God, when I am called to give guidance and encouragement to others as they live into your call for their lives. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

