

GROUP DISCUSSION

Questions for facilitating dynamic discussion

Samuel - Hearing God in the Chaos
Week 2: Recognizing God's Voice
1 Samuel 3:1-21

May 16, 2026
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In a noisy world, filled with many competing voices, how do you recognize which one is God's? As we continue the story of Samuel, we see how God spoke to Samuel for the first time. And we learn from his example how to attune ourselves to know when God is speaking to us.

Kicking It Off:

When you were growing up, how did your parents summon you – for dinner, for time to leave, or to find you in a crowd? Did they have a special sound or signal (like ringing a dinner bell)?

Discussion:

1. Think about the last time you were in a crowded, noisy setting trying to have a conversation. How difficult did you find it to converse? What did you do to cope with the noise & distractions?
2. Read 1 Samuel 3:1-9. Where were Eli and Samuel on this particular night and what (presumably) were they doing? How does Samuel respond when he hears his name? What does this say about his character? How does this compare with what we know of Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas?
3. Read 1 Samuel 3:6-9. What are we told about why Samuel kept thinking it was Eli calling him (v. 7)? Why is this significant? Observe: what does Eli instruct him to do? And what does Samuel do? What role (if any) do you think Samuel's humble, submissive nature played in God choosing to speak to him? What does this suggest about how we should relate to God?
4. Eli's relationship and experiences with God allowed him to guide Samuel in recognizing God's voice. Who do you turn to for guidance when you think you might be hearing from God?
5. We can't always rely on a spiritual mentor to help us. Read 1 John 4:1-3. What's one way to "test" whether what you're hearing is the voice of God? Share a time when you "tested" what you were hearing to know whether it was from God.

Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. (1John1:2b, NIV)

6. Which step in recognizing the voice of God from Jeff's sermon do you want to work on in the coming weeks – listening more carefully, asking God to speak, evaluating what you think He's saying, or acting on what you've heard?

Wrapping Up:

Hearing God speak is not something for the uber-holy. It's a part of every believer's life. Pray that you and those in your group would delight in listening for, and following, God's voice.

My sheep recognize my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. (John 10:27, TLB)