

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening

Week 10: Our reading this week again comes from the First Testament. We hear the call of Samuel, one of God's prophets. Samuel lives & works in the temple with Eli the priest.

Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' and he said, 'Here I am!' and ran to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call; lie down again.' So he went and lay down. The LORD called again, 'Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call, my son; lie down again.' Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening."

1 Samuel 3.3b-9

Choose the reflective questions that suit your family:

We notice how the LORD calls Samuel--*by name*. Samuel does not yet know the LORD, but the LORD knows Samuel. Does the LORD only know Samuel's name? Or does the LORD know our names, too? What do we say when we hear the LORD call our name?

Ages 3-6

We notice that the LORD continues to call Samuel even though Samuel does not know what is going on. Why does the LORD not give up and find someone else? The LORD calls and calls *until* Samuel understands. It is good to know that this is the way the LORD works. Have we heard the LORD calling us? How can we know?

Ages 6-9

Here I am!

We notice that each time Samuel thinks Eli calls him, he responds, "Here I am!" We see in his willingness to obey, his devotion to Eli. When the LORD finally speaks to Samuel, Samuel hears that the LORD has a difficult role for him, one that brings terrible news for Eli. Samuel does the LORD's work even though it is hard. Does Samuel's relationship with Eli make it harder or easier to obey the LORD?

Teenagers

We notice that each time Samuel hears the voice of the LORD, he thinks it is Eli calling. Something in the LORD's call reminds Samuel of Eli. And Eli is the one who puts Samuel in touch with the LORD. If the LORD were to call us, who would we think it was? Who are the people in our lives who put us in touch with the LORD?

Ages 9-12

Read the scripture.

Ask questions.

Listen to each other's answers.

Then pray the prayer together on page 2.

Listen Prayer

One person leads and everyone else responds (R.)

Lord, our God,

We praise you for the wisdom of your will that unfolds all around us. We desire to enter more profoundly into this mystery, to root ourselves firmly in your will, to listen ever more deeply to you.

R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

Teach us to listen closely to your Word—to the words on the page and the meaning they invoke, to the human author and to the divine, to the spaces between the letters where your Spirit dwells.



R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

Teach us to listen attentively to Creation—to the voice of the earth, to the whispering of wind and waves, to the silence of the rocks and soil and swarms of voiceless creatures.



R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

Teach us to listen respectfully to the culture that surrounds us—to its wisdom and its folly, to the loud voices and the quiet, to that which can teach us and form us and expand our thinking.



R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

And teach us, Lord, to listen deeply to one another—to what we speak aloud and to what we leave unsaid, to our needs and to our concerns, to the love and the longing and desires of our hearts.

**R. We come before you.
We make ourselves still.
We listen to understand.
Amen.**

