NUDGES 3

Nudges in the right direction



UNDERSTANDING GOD'S VOICE

Homecoming

Wim Kamphorst

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Foreword

The first thing God asks a human being in the Bible is not a command. It is a question: “Where are you?” Adam and Eve had hidden among the trees. God knew, of course, where they were. But He wanted them to say it themselves. That is how the story of coming home begins: with a God who calls, and a human being who may answer.

I know that question from my own life. In 2001 I no longer saw any point in living. At my lowest point I heard a voice: “Wim, there is something in this life worth living for.” God called me by name. In 2002 I chose to follow Him. That was my first homecoming.

But I have discovered that coming home does not happen just once. Even if you have followed Jesus for years, you can drift away. You get busy, your heart gets clogged up, the Bible feels dry. Then the same question sounds again: “Where are you?” Not to condemn you, but to call you back.

> *“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.”*
> Psalm 103:13

This booklet is for everyone who wants to come home. For those who do not yet know God, and for those who have known Him for a long time but lost their way somewhere along the road. These are nudges: small pushes in the right direction, back to the Father’s house.

Wim Kamphorst, founder of (F)Luister Nederland

Introduction

Jesus told a story about a son who asked for his inheritance and left. He spent everything, ended up in poverty and landed among the pigs. Then something happened: “He came to himself.” He thought of his father’s house and decided to go back.

What always touches me in this story is not the son. It is the father. He was already on the lookout. He saw his son from far away, ran to him and threw his arms around him. The son had prepared a whole speech, but the father did not even let him finish. He called for clothes, a ring and a feast.

> *“But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”*
> Luke 15:20

This is the foundation of this booklet: God is a Father who looks out for His children. Coming home does not begin with your performance, but with His heart. And because God speaks, He also calls. At its core, coming home is therefore listening: recognizing His voice among all the other voices, and turning around.

A closer look:

“Moved with compassion deep within” is one word in Greek: splagchnizomai. It comes from the word for the inner organs. It is a love you feel in your gut, a deep compassion that sets you in motion. That is why the father runs.

Chapter 1 Where are you?

In the Garden of Eden, God walked with Adam and Eve every day. They talked with one another, the way friends do. It was home. Until they listened to another voice and ate from the tree that God had told them not to eat from. When God came into the garden again that afternoon, they were not there. They had hidden.

> *"And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?"*
> Genesis 3:9

Notice what God does not do. He does not stay angry in heaven, waiting for Adam to report in. He comes Himself, and He calls. That is the pattern throughout the whole Bible. God seeks. The shepherd leaves the ninety-nine sheep behind and goes after the one that is lost. The woman sweeps her whole house until she finds her coin. The father keeps watch until his son returns.

Hiding

We humans hide in all kinds of ways. Behind busyness, behind work, behind a pious exterior, behind shame. Adam said: "I heard Your voice in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked; so I hid myself." Notice: he heard God's voice, and that is exactly why he hid. Shame and fear are the two great reasons why people do not come home. They think God is angry, that they first have to put something right, that they are not welcome.

In the booklet Understanding God's Voice I wrote about noise on the line. If someone believes that God dislikes him, it is hard to receive impressions of love. That false conviction is noise. It is the same with coming home. As long as you think the door is closed, you keep standing outside, while the Father is already running.

My own homecoming

My homecoming began in a meadow near Nunspeet. It was summer and I was sitting by a stream, far from the walking paths. I no longer saw any point in living. Then someone said: “Wim, there is something in this life worth living for.” I looked around. There was nobody. But that voice brought strength with it, enough to get back on my feet and go looking one more time.

I looked for help and ended up in a shelter. A woman came to live there who talked a lot about Jesus, lively and real. Through her, through a letter full of answers to my questions and through a prayer late one evening beside my bed, I came to Jesus in 2002.

After that, nothing happened for three weeks. No voice, no special experience. Until one day I was cycling home in tears, after a disappointment that brought all the old pain back to the surface. Then I heard the same voice, this time from within, soft and powerful: “Wim, I am with you and I will never leave you alone.” All the misery disappeared like snow in the sun. I came home in peace, with a certainty that I never lost again: He is with me.

Only years later did I realize how much had gone before it in the silence. My mother and her friend had been praying for me all that time, precisely when things were getting worse and worse for me. I did not notice anything of it then. But thanks to their prayers, openings remained for me to hear His voice in the end. Perhaps you are also praying for someone who is far from home. Do not give up. Intercession is often invisible, until years later it suddenly lights up.

Do you recognize something of the despair I had then, or are you toying with the thought of ending your life? Do not stay alone with it. Talk to someone you trust or to your doctor, or contact 113 Suicide Prevention day and night (in the Netherlands): call 113 or toll-free 0800-0113, or chat via 113.nl.

He calls you by name

Jesus says that He calls His sheep by name. He does not know you as a number, but as a person. Perhaps you have already heard His voice without recognizing it. A restlessness that will not go away. A longing for more. A song that touches you. A Bible verse that stayed with you. A conversation in which someone said something that was exactly right.

> *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."*
> John 10:27

God does not speak only to prophets and preachers. He also speaks to seekers. I regularly hear from people who did not yet believe and still had a dream, a supernatural experience, or a moment when they knew: this does not come from me. Such moments are invitations. It is the Father calling: "Where are you?"

All Adam had to do was answer. That is the beginning for you too. You do not need to know a perfect prayer. You may simply say where you are: "Here I am. I have hidden myself. I want to come home."

Chapter 2 Returning when you already believe

Coming home is not only for people who do not yet know God. Even if you have followed Jesus for years, you can end up far from home. Not all at once, but slowly. You are still in church on Sundays, but your heart is somewhere else.

Peter went back to his nets

Peter had spent three years with Jesus. He had heard that Jesus was the Christ, not from people but from the Father Himself. And yet he denied Jesus three times. After the crucifixion he did what many disappointed believers do: he went back to his old life. “I am going fishing,” he said.

Disappointment had such a grip on him that he went back to who he was before he met Jesus. But Jesus came to him. By the lake, at a fire, with bread and fish. Jesus did not give a lecture. He asked a question, three times: “Do you love Me?” And He gave Peter his calling back: “Feed My sheep.”

Peter came home because Jesus spoke with him. That is still how it works. One word from Jesus can restore what years of disappointment have broken down.

How do you notice that you are drifting?

In the first booklet I wrote about two sensitivities. The first is sensitivity to the Holy Spirit when He wants to do something through you. The second is that you notice you no longer experience the power and the fruit of the Spirit in your daily life. That you are more occupied with the world than with God’s Kingdom.

For me, I sometimes notice it after just a week. I have been busy, I have done a lot, but I have listened little. For you it may only show after a few weeks. A few signals that I recognize:

- The Bible feels dry and you read it out of duty, or no longer at all.
- You have not had an encounter with Jesus for a long time.
- You no longer see His fruit and His gifts in your life.
- You still pray, but it feels as if you are talking to the ceiling.
- Other voices have become louder: worries, screens, opinions, busyness.

These are not reasons to be ashamed. They are signals, like the light in your car that tells you the tank is almost empty. You can ignore the light, but it is better to refuel.

The way back

When the prodigal son came to himself, he did two things. He got up, and he went to his father. Nothing more. Coming home is therefore very simple, even if it does not always feel that way.

For me, praying and fasting is often a way of coming home. When I notice that I am too occupied with worldly matters and Jesus is no longer central, I deliberately set time aside. I read, I pray, I look back through my journals: what has Jesus said, what has He done? Often I discover that He had been calling for a long time, but that I was too busy to hear it.

Inner healing can also be a form of coming home. During one season in our house group we experienced together that God wanted to give inner healing. That week I had three dreams in which, piece by piece, I was set free from old wounds from a past of being bullied, which I thought I had left behind long ago. After that came a process of a year and a half in which the Spirit came alongside me as a teacher. He showed me what had happened, how it had happened, and how I could walk in freedom. In this way I came home a little more, to the Father and to myself.

> *“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”*
> Revelation 3:20

Jesus wrote these words to a church, to believers. He was standing outside their door. He knocked and He spoke. So coming home also means: opening the door to Him again.

Chapter 3 How do you come home?

Coming home is not a technique, it is a relationship. Still, there are a few nudges that have helped me. Take what fits you.

1. **Say honestly where you are**

   God asked Adam: “Where are you?” You may simply answer that, out loud or on paper. Are you tired, disappointed, angry, far away? Tell Him. Honesty is the door through which you enter. The father did not even let his son finish his whole speech.

2. **Open your ear again**

   Coming home begins with hearing. Take a week in which you are quiet before God for a quarter of an hour every day, without a list. Read a passage from a Gospel and ask: “What do You want to say to me today?” Write down what stays with you, even if it seems small. I use a notes app on my phone for that. Later I test what I have written down against the Bible.

3. **Go for a walk with God**

   Of Enoch it simply says that he walked with God. I do that literally, with my dog Binkie. Outside, without a screen and without hurry, my mind comes to rest and there is room to listen. A dog knows his master’s

voice among all the other sounds. Not through a course, but because he is there with him every day. Recognizing God's voice grows in the same way.

4. **Look back at what God has already said**

   Take your journal, your notes or your memories. When did God speak to you? What did He promise? What did He do? Peter had gone back to his nets, but at the fire he was reminded of who he was. Memories of God's faithfulness are like little lights on the road home.

5. **Find a place where you are allowed to be at home**

   Nobody comes home alone. Look for people who want to walk along with you: a house group, a church, a spiritual father or mother. In our house church we encourage one another, build one another up and grow together. There you may be who you are, even when you have lost your way for a while.

The Father is on the lookout. He is watching out for you. You do not have to be clean first, be strong, or have your speech ready. Get up, and go home.

FAQ

Question: I have come back and gone away again so many times. May I still come?
Answer: Yes. Peter denied Jesus three times and was asked three times, “Do you love Me?” Jesus taught that we are to forgive seventy times seven. If He asks that of us, then He gives it Himself too. His door is not closed because you have walked away more often.

Question: I hear nothing at all when I pray. Is God calling me, then?
Answer: That is very recognizable; for me it was like that for a long time too. God often speaks more subtly than we expect: through peace or through unrest, through a Bible verse, through a desire that will not go away. Perhaps He has already spoken and you have not yet recognized it. Keep listening, write down what you notice and talk about it with someone who is further along in faith.

Question: Do I have to get my life in order first before I can come home?
Answer: No. The son came home in the clothes he had been wearing among the pigs. The father gave him new clothes, a ring and a feast. The cleaning up comes afterwards, together with the Father. It is a process, and it is allowed to take time.

At whispermagazine.org you can read true stories of people who heard God speak, learn more about hearing His voice and read our free Whisper magazine.

About (F)Luister Nederland

(F)Luister Nederland is a movement that wants to help believers understand the voice of God and grow in it. We believe that God still speaks today and that His children can learn to recognize, understand and obey His voice.

Our mission

We want to equip and encourage people to walk in relationship with Jesus in their daily lives, led by the Holy Spirit. It is our desire that more and more followers of Jesus learn to listen to His whisper and take bold steps in response.

Our vision

We see a church and a society in which God's voice is central once again. Where believers do not only listen to sermons or opinions, but live out of an intimate relationship with their Father in heaven. A generation that understands God's voice and, as a result, makes a difference in their surroundings.

Together we learn to understand His voice

There is more

This booklet is a nudge in the right direction. Do you want to go further? Whisper has more to help you on your way.

Whisper magazine
Our free magazine, to read online. **whispermagazine.org/magazine.html**

Seliah, our app
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Ten questions to test what you hear. **whispermagazine.org/how-do-you-test.html**

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A free 30-day reading plan. **whispermagazine.org/magazine.html**

The Listening Profile
How do you hear God? **whispermagazine.org/listening-profile.html**

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Homecoming

Listening to Him. Coming home to the Father.

God speaks. Every day. Not only to prophets or spiritual leaders, but to each one of us. The problem is not that He is silent, but that we often do not tune in properly.

In this book, Wim Kamphorst takes you on a journey to learn to recognize, understand and obey the voice of God. You will discover:

- how God calls you, just as He called Adam: “Where are you?”;
- how you notice that you are drifting, even if you have believed for a long time;
- five nudges to come home to the Father.

In 2001, at the lowest point of his life, Wim Kamphorst heard God’s voice: “There is something worth living for.” Ever since, he keeps discovering that coming home does not happen just once, but a whole lifetime.

With personal testimonies, clear Bible passages and practical examples, this book makes clear that coming home to the Father is something that is close to God’s heart.

God speaks.
Do you hear Him calling?

