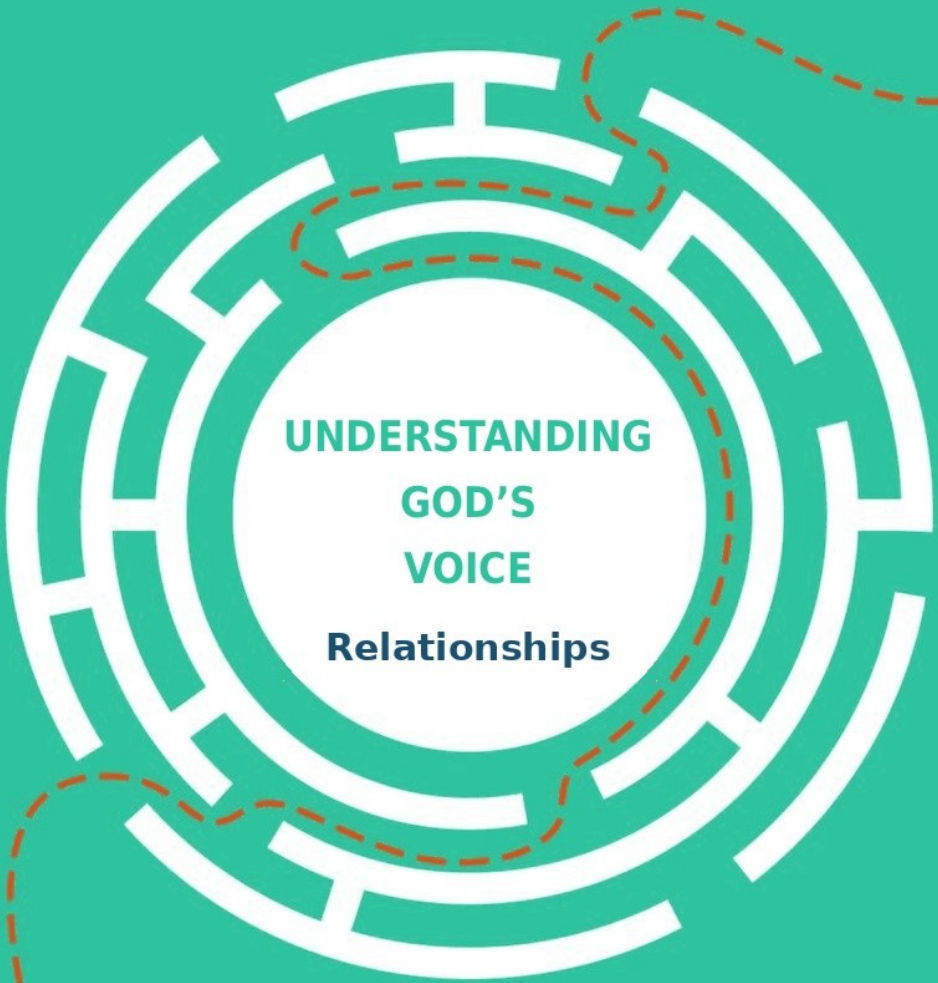
NUDGES 7

Nudges in the right direction



UNDERSTANDING GOD'S VOICE

Relationships

Wim Kamphorst

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Foreword

The first thing in the Bible that God does not call good is loneliness. Everything He had created was good. The light, the land, the animals. But when He looked at Adam, He said: “It is not good that man should be alone.” God made us for relationships. With Him, and with one another.

My own journey of faith was a lonely road for a long time. There were not many people around me who believed that God still speaks today. That is exactly why I know how precious it is when you find people with whom you can listen, pray, doubt and grow together.

> *“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”*
> Proverbs 27:17

This booklet is about relationships in the light of God’s voice: your relationship with God Himself, with spiritual fathers and mothers, with friends, with your church or group. These are nudges, small pushes to discover that listening is something you do together.

Wim Kamphorst, founder of (F)Luister Nederland

Introduction

In the Garden of Eden, God walked with Adam and Eve every day. They talked with one another, like friends. That is the origin of understanding God's voice: not a system of rules, but a relationship. God speaks because He wants a relationship.

Jesus made that very concrete. At the end of His life He told His disciples that He no longer called them servants, but friends. And the reason He gave is remarkable: because He had told them everything He had heard from His Father. Friendship with Jesus is hearing what He hears from the Father.

> *"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."*
> John 15:15

From that relationship with God flow all our other relationships. The closer you live to Him, the more you begin to see the other person the way He sees them.

A closer look:
The Greek word koinonia is often translated as fellowship. It means: sharing in something together. The first Christians shared the teaching, the bread, the prayers and their possessions. Fellowship was not an activity on Sunday, but a shared life.

Chapter 1 Listening is something you do together

For a long time I thought that understanding God's voice was mainly something personal. You and God, in your quiet time. That is also true. But the longer I follow Jesus, the more I discover that you rarely understand God's voice reliably on your own. God has placed us in a body. What one person hears, the other may test.

Spiritual fathers and mothers

In the Bible there are elders. These are people who are more mature in faith than you are yourself. I have followed Jesus since 2002, but I know people who have known Him for fifty years. They are often a good deal further along in spiritual maturity. You could call them spiritual fathers and mothers: people who love you and want to look along with you in your life of faith.

We all need these people. They can help you test impressions, thanks to their knowledge of the Bible, their experience of the character of Jesus, their life experience and their relationship with you. Do you not have such people in your life yet? Look for one or two.

Friends who are honest

A good friend does not only say what you want to hear. Herman Boon once said that I was a scaredy-cat, because after nine days of prayer and fasting I had skipped the evangelism day. Perhaps he concluded that a little quickly. But it did make me think. Iron sharpens iron, and that sometimes chafes.

Together we see and hear more

I have discovered that I like having someone with me who talks easily, so that I can take time to listen to God. In Nunspeet I did evangelism with Gert. I said a few things to a woman that we could not have known, and Gert was able to pick up on that in the conversation. Good teamwork. In Rotterdam a

friend spontaneously turned to two young men to share the gospel, and meanwhile I received a word of knowledge that opened the conversation.

> *"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow."*
> Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

At (F)Luister we often say: together we see and hear more. That is not a slogan, but an experience.

Chapter 2 God's voice in your relationships

God does not only speak about relationships. He also speaks in relationships. Through a friend, a member of your group, a colleague, sometimes even through someone you have just met.

Praying for those you meet

Before I go to an appointment, I pray for one person whom I am going to meet there. I ask God for an impression with which I can encourage the other person. Once I was going to meet someone with whom we might work together. I had prayed and received an impression to make a specific proposal. When I shared it during the meeting, it turned out to come at exactly the right moment. We thanked God together for His guidance.

That is how you can become a channel of God's voice in every relationship. Not by preaching, but by listening and passing on what you receive, at an appropriate moment.

Relationships at work

In a car-cleaning business I had a colleague who was looking for God without knowing it. I simply coached him and shared testimonies, until he met a pastor and came to faith. After that I was able to explain a lot to him about the Bible, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and God the Father. Relationships at work grow slowly. You see the same people for years on end. There it is mainly the fruit of the Spirit that counts: patience, kindness, faithfulness.

Strength and gentleness

Many men, and also many women, think that being strong means you are not bothered by anything and have everything under control. But real strength dares to be honest, to say sorry and to ask for help. Jesus was strong and gentle at the same time. He dared to go against the current and at the same time took time for children and for people whom nobody saw.

Relationships break down through pride and are restored through humility. If God shows you something about how you treat someone, that is not condemnation. It is an invitation to restoration.

> *"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."*
> Romans 12:18

A house of living stones

Our house church belongs to AVIV, a network of house churches. A gathering is always different. Usually we worship and afterwards we share. Sometimes we share first and then go on to pray. Sometimes we all go for a walk. During one season in that group we experienced together that God wanted to give inner healing, and He did it too, in my case through three dreams in one week. I might never have noticed that on my own.

> *"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works."*
> Hebrews 10:24

Chapter 3 How do you grow in relationships?

Relationships do not grow by themselves. They ask for attention, time and sometimes courage. A few nudges:

1. **Start with your relationship with God**

   Walk with Him as Adam did. Tell Him how your day was and ask what He thinks of it. A quarter of an hour a day with Jesus is not a box to tick, but time with a Friend. Out of that relationship flow your other relationships.

2. **Look for a spiritual father or mother**

   Look around: who lives close to God and is further along in faith than you? Ask whether you may occasionally talk, pray and have your impressions tested by that person. A cup of coffee is enough to begin with.

3. **Pray for those you are going to meet**

   Pray for one person before you go to an appointment, a birthday or a meeting. Ask God for an encouraging word and share it if it fits, modestly and as a question.

4. **Dare to be honest and to say sorry**

   Is there a relationship that chafes? Ask God what your part is. Say sorry where it is needed, and forgive where you can. Do not let the sun go down on your anger.

5. **Choose a place to listen together**

   Join a house group, prayer group or church where there is room to listen to God together. Practice there: share what you receive, have it tested, and encourage one another.

God did not make you to be alone. Jesus promised that He is in the midst where two or three gather in His Name. He speaks in the silence, but also in the voice of a friend.

FAQ

Question: I have no Christian friends around me. How do I begin?
Answer: Begin by praying that God will bring people onto your path. Look for a group, an Alpha course or a church nearby and go a few times. Friendship grows through time together. You do not have to share your deepest questions right away; start with a cup of coffee.

Question: Do I always have to have an impression I have received tested by others?
Answer: Not every small impression. If it concerns choices with big consequences for yourself or for others, then do seek people who are mature in faith to examine together whether it could come from God. Together you know more.

Question: Someone says he has something from God for me, but it does not feel right. What do I do?
Answer: You are yourself responsible for testing it. See whether it fits with the Bible and with the character of Jesus. If it is condemning, pushy or proud, you may set it aside. Talk it over with someone you trust. A true word from God builds up, encourages and comforts.

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**

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Relationships

Listening to Him. Understanding His voice together.

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:

- why God made you for relationships, with Him and with one another;
- how spiritual fathers, mothers and friends help you listen;
- five nudges to grow in relationships.

For a long time Wim Kamphorst walked a lonely road in his faith. That is exactly why he built places where people learn to listen together, from a house church to (F)Luister Nederland.

With personal testimonies, clear Bible passages and practical examples, this book makes clear that listening to God together is something that is close to God's heart.

God speaks.
Who are you listening with?

