NUDGES 12

Nudges in the right direction



UNDERSTANDING GOD'S VOICE

Calling

Wim Kamphorst

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Foreword

God called Samuel in the middle of the night. Samuel was still young and did not yet know the voice of the LORD. He thought it was the priest Eli. Only when Eli taught him how to answer did the conversation begin: “Speak, for Your servant is listening.”

That is how calling begins. Not with a vacancy or a plan, but with a voice that calls you. And with a person who learns to answer.

> *“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.”*
> Isaiah 6:8

In my life I have thought that I was called to things that later turned out to be my own dream. I have also done things that I thought I would never be able to do. This booklet is about calling in the light of God’s voice. These are nudges: small pushes to discover what He is calling you to, and to take the next step.

Wim Kamphorst, founder of (F)Luister Nederland

Introduction

Many people think of something big when they think of calling. Becoming a missionary, starting a church, becoming a pastor. That is possible. But the Bible begins with something else. Your first calling is not a task. It is a Person. Jesus did not first call His disciples to do something, but to be with Him.

Out of that relationship the rest flows. God has prepared good works for you. Not to make you toil, but to walk in, together with Him.

> *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*
> Ephesians 2:10

A closer look:

The Greek word for workmanship in Ephesians 2:10 is poiema. Our word poem comes from it. You are not a product of a factory. You are a work of art by God, made with care, with a shape and a place of your own.

Chapter 1 Called by His voice

Known before you were there

When God called Jeremiah, Jeremiah protested. He thought himself too young and he could not speak. But God had known him for a long time.

> *"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee."*
> Jeremiah 1:5

Your calling does not begin with your talents. It begins with God's heart. He knew you before you could do anything. That takes the pressure away. You do not have to earn your calling. You may discover it.

I cannot speak

Jeremiah said: "I cannot speak." I recognize that. Speaking is not my strongest point. The first time I stood in front of a class, I got completely stuck after five minutes. Still, I had a strong sense that God was inviting me to learn to share. Not necessarily to preach, but to tell what Jesus was doing in my life.

I kept doing it, by trial and error. I learned that obedience does not begin when the fear is gone, but when trust becomes greater than the fear. God often calls you precisely in the area where you feel weak. Then it becomes visible that it is His power.

> *"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."*
> 2 Corinthians 12:9

Writing, which I could not do

Something similar happened with writing. I knew that reading plans for YouVersion needed to be made. But I did not first take it to God. I immediately looked for others to do it. The team fell apart. Slowly I understood what was wrong. I was trying to organize away an assignment

that had first been given to me. I find writing difficult. That is exactly why I looked for help so quickly. By now I write myself, and there are reading plans that can be read in many countries. This booklet too is a fruit of that.

A word that gives direction

Sometimes God uses other people to make your calling visible. The first time I passed on a prophetic word myself was to a young man who doubted his leadership. I was touched by who he was: he was a leader and was simply allowed to stand in that place. So I said that. He was amazed. At the end of that year he told in church that from those words on he had started looking at leadership differently and had started moving in it.

I have also received it the other way around. At Bible school someone told me that I would make short trips to see what God is doing in other countries, and that I would hand that out in the Netherlands. I tested it, renewed my passport and not long afterwards I left for Mongolia. A word from someone else did not replace my own listening. It confirmed what God was already laying in my heart.

> *"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*
> 1 Peter 4:10

Chapter 2 Your own dream or God's voice?

One of the trickiest things about calling is the difference between what you want and what God says. The two can coincide. But they can also differ.

The Bible school that never came

My own time at Bible school was so good that I wanted to bring that atmosphere back. I tried to start a Bible school myself. It did not work. I remained convinced that God had laid this on my heart, even when no breakthrough came for years. The frustrating thing was that God stayed silent about it.

One day I received a prophetic word: God is calling you for a movement, not for a Bible school. That hurt. Shortly afterwards a friend of mine got exactly the places I had longed for. Then the penny dropped. It was my own dream, which I had mistaken for His voice. I needed at least two months to process that. When I gave it back to God, the burden disappeared.

Out of that letting go grew something else. A place where people learn together to listen to God's voice: (F)Luister Nederland. A movement, not a school.

Wanting to belong somewhere

I once received the impression to go and work for a foundation. I started there as a cleaner. They were lovely people, but I did not feel at home there and I stopped. Afterwards I realized that I had not really prayed about it. I was simply looking for a place to belong. That was my soul speaking, not my spirit listening to God.

How do you test it?

A few questions help me see the difference:

- Does it bring me closer to Jesus, or do I mostly become busy and tense?
- Is there peace on it, even when it is exciting?
- What do people who love me and are further along in faith say?
- Am I willing to let it go if God asks me to?
- Is it about His Kingdom, or about my name?

My spiritual parents once thought I should not publish a booklet that I had written. I had to search honestly. It turned out to be my own desire. I never released it. Spiritual parents are not there to slow you down, but to see what you cannot yet see in your own desire.

Calling in the ordinary

For a number of years I drove a bus in special education. Every day I saw how much pain lay behind the front door of many families. Slowly I got to know the children, and their parents and caregivers. Moments arose in which I was allowed to pray with a parent who was having a hard time, or to let a child notice that God loves him.

There I learned that calling does not stop at the walls of the church. The Holy Spirit travels along to your work. Your calling may just as well lie in a school bus as on a stage.

Chapter 3 How do you discover your calling?

You seldom discover your calling all at once. It is a road that shows itself while you walk. A few nudges:

1. **Start with Him**

   Do not first ask: “What must I do?” Ask: “Lord, how can I live closer to You?” Out of that closeness comes direction. For a week, take time every day to listen and write down what comes up.

2. **Look at what touches you**

   What moves you? Which people or situations will not let you go? Compassion is often a language of the Spirit. Write down three things that touch you and ask God whether there is something of His calling in them.

3. **Do what lies at hand**

   Do not wait for the big moment. Serve where you are now: at work, in your church, in your street. Faithfulness in the small often opens the door to more. Who despises the day of small things?

4. **Let yourself be tested**

   Share what you think you hear with people who are further along in faith. Ask them honestly what they see. Be willing to let something go. A true calling survives honest questions.

5. **Give your dream back to God**

   Is there a dream that you are clinging to tightly? Deliberately place it in God’s hands in prayer. Say: “If this is from You, I give it to You. If it is from me, You may take it away.” Notice the rest that follows.

God does not call perfect people. He calls people who listen and answer. Here am I, send me.

FAQ

Question: I have no idea what my calling is. Is there something wrong with me?
Answer: No. Many people only discover their calling along the way. Start with your first calling: knowing and following Jesus. Serve where you are now, pay attention to what touches you and ask God for direction. Often you only see afterwards how the steps fit together.

Question: Does a calling always have to be something churchy?
Answer: No. God calls people in healthcare, education, technology, entrepreneurship, the family. His Kingdom is everywhere. The question is not whether your work is spiritual enough, but whether you do it together with Him.

Question: What if I thought I was called, but it got stuck?
Answer: I have experienced that too. Sometimes the what was right, but not the timing. Sometimes it was your own dream. Bring it honestly to God, let yourself be tested by people you trust and do not be afraid to let something go. What God truly wants is not lost. From my abandoned Bible school something grew in the end that fit much better.

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
Our free app, for on the go. **whispermagazine.org/app**

How do you test an impression?
Ten questions to test what you hear. **whispermagazine.org/how-do-you-test.html**

More Nudges
Booklets on other themes. **whispermagazine.org/nudges.html**

Listening together
A guide for your small group. **whispermagazine.org/listening-together.html**

Quiet. I am listening.
A free 30-day reading plan. **whispermagazine.org/magazine.html**

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

True stories
People who heard God speak. **whispermagazine.org/stories.html**

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Calling

Listening to Him. Discovering what He is calling you to.

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 your calling begins with Him and not with a position;
- how you learn to see the difference between your own dream and God's voice;
- five nudges to follow your calling step by step.

For years Wim Kamphorst tried to start a Bible school. It did not work. A prophetic word showed him that God was calling him for a movement. That is how (F)Luister Nederland grew.

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

God speaks.
What is He calling you to?