NUDGES 15

Nudges in the right direction



UNDERSTANDING GOD'S VOICE

Rest

Wim Kamphorst

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Foreword

Jesus was busy. People came and went, so many that He and His disciples did not even have time to eat. And what did He do? He took them to a quiet place.

> *"And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat."*
> Mark 6:31

I find that an encouraging verse. Jesus saw that His friends were tired, and He took it seriously. He did not say: "Just push on a little longer, the work is important." He said: come with Me, rest a while.

This booklet is about rest. About the gift of the Sabbath, about working from rest, and about the rest that Jesus gives to those who are weary and burdened. These are nudges: small pushes to catch your breath, with Him.

Wim Kamphorst, founder of (F)Luister Nederland

Introduction

God rested on the seventh day. Not because He was tired, but because His work was finished and good. He enjoyed it. And He invited human beings to join in. Adam was created on the sixth day. His first full day was therefore a day of rest. He did not begin with working, but with resting in God.

That says something. In God's rhythm, rest does not come after the work, as a reward. Rest comes first. You work from rest, not for rest.

> *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*
> Matthew 11:28

Jesus does not promise a life without work. He invites you to share your yoke with Him. A yoke is a wooden beam that two oxen carry together. You do not have to pull it alone.

A closer look:
The Hebrew word Sabbath comes from shabat: to cease, to stop. So the Sabbath is first of all a day on which you stop. You stop producing, performing and arranging. That is how you learn that the world keeps turning without you, and that God takes care of you.

Chapter 1 The gift of rest

> *"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God."*
> Exodus 20:8-10

The Sabbath was a gift to a people who had worked as slaves for four hundred years. Slaves do not have a day off. Their value lies in what they produce. God said to His people: you are no longer slaves. You may rest.

A son, not a servant

For a long time, toward God I felt more like a missionary than a family member. A worker in His Kingdom. Useful, busy for Him, but not naturally at home. I started praying about it and reading the Bible until the penny dropped. That feeling was an old feeling and not the truth. I am a child in His family. I simply belong.

In the beginning I wanted to hear God's voice mainly in order to be useful. The more I dared to receive His love, the less I did things for God, and the more I did things with God. That is where rest begins. Not with a day off in your agenda, but with knowing who you are.

A Sabbath rest that remains

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews says that there remains another rest for God's people. A rest that goes deeper than one day a week.

> *"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."*
> Hebrews 4:9-10

That rest is ceasing to prove yourself. Jesus has done the work. You no longer have to earn your place with God. From that rest you may work, serve and build. Without your worth depending on it.

Stillness in the Spirit

I was once worshiping alone with my guitar, in my own room. There was nothing special on the program. Then the presence of God came into the room. I felt a heaviness, like a heavy blanket, but a heaviness that consisted only of love and rest. I lay down. It was as if God was going deeper and deeper into my heart. Until I found it too scary and said: “Stop. I can’t receive any more.”

God stopped. I regretted that later. But I also know that He knows that I am fine with it when He goes even deeper into my life. That afternoon I learned that God’s rest is not emptiness. It is His presence.

Chapter 2 Working from rest

Many Christians are tired. Not only of their work, but also of their faith. There is so much that has to be done. Praying, Bible reading, serving in the church, witnessing. All good things. But when it becomes a list that you have to work through, you become exhausted.

An emergency brake

In the time that I was at Bible school, I noticed that I was going faster than God asked of me. It was not disobedience. It was a drive to perform. I wanted a lot, and I wanted to do it well. At a certain point I noticed that I had fallen out of His rhythm.

Fasting then became, for me, not an extra spiritual achievement. It became an emergency brake. It forced me to let go of my hurry and step back into His rhythm. Perhaps you also need an emergency brake. That can be fasting, but also a day without a phone, a walk or a week without extra appointments.

Season by season

I have learned to move season by season. At one time quiet time is at the top, at another fasting, and at yet another reading the Bible. As soon as I turn it into a fixed system, it goes wrong. Then it has to happen under pressure, or it no longer works. What counts is that I can be in His presence and do what He gives rest about.

When Bible reading feels dry for a while, I do not panic. Then I listen to the audio Bible or to a sermon. It does not matter how I receive His words, as long as I receive them. That too is rest: not clinging tightly to a form.

Tend and keep

The first assignment God gave Adam was to tend and keep the garden. Many people are busy with the first and forget the second. They build, but

they do not keep. Their relationship with God, their marriage and their own soul run empty while the work grows. A pastor once asked himself whether he was busier with the work of the Lord than with the Lord of the work. That is a good question for all of us.

> *"In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not."*
> Isaiah 30:15

Those last words touch me: "and ye would not." God offered rest, but His people preferred to run themselves. Rest therefore requires a choice.

Spiritually tired

After a church split I was spiritually tired for about four years. It was a time of filtering: what was church, what was human, what were wounds and what was truth? There was little to experience, mostly a lot to sort out. Only when we could come again into His presence alone could we slowly start to seek out other believers again and build. I do not see those years as lost. They were years in which God let us rest and recover.

Chapter 3 How do you come to rest?

Rest is not something that happens to you. It is something you choose and practice. A few nudges:

1. **Choose a fixed day of rest**

   Choose one day or part of a day each week on which you do not work, do not arrange things and do not perform. Do things that let your heart breathe: walking, eating with people you love, worshiping, sleeping. Start small if a whole day does not work.

2. **Begin your day with Him**

   Do not reach for your phone right away when you wake up. First take a few minutes to say good morning to Jesus and give your day to Him. That way your day begins from rest instead of from hurry.

3. **Use an emergency brake**

   Do you notice that you are driven? Deliberately apply a brake: a day of fasting, an evening without a screen, a walk alone with God. Ask: “Lord, where have I fallen out of Your rhythm?”

4. **Lay your yoke on Jesus**

   Write down what you find heaviest at the moment. Read Matthew 11:28-30 and give those things to Him one by one. Ask: “What may I let go of, and what do You want to carry together with me?”

5. **Keep what you build**

   Look back at the end of the week. How much time went to work, and how much to God, to the people close to you and to your own soul? Plan one concrete moment for next week to keep, not only to build.

God did not make you as a workhorse. He made you as His child. Children may rest in their Father’s house.

FAQ

Question: As a Christian, do I have to do nothing on Sundays?
Answer: Christians think differently about that. Jesus showed that the Sabbath is there for people, and not people for the Sabbath. It is not about rules, but about the rhythm of work and rest that God has given. Choose a fixed time to stop, to rest and to seek God, and fill it in a way that does your heart and your relationships good.

Question: I am simply too busy. How do I find rest then?
Answer: Start with small moments. Turning your attention to Jesus for a moment a few times a day costs little time and gives a lot. Then look honestly at your agenda. What can you drop? Sometimes saying no to something good is needed in order to say yes to rest.

Question: I have been tired and exhausted for a long time. Is that a spiritual problem?
Answer: It may be spiritual, but also physical or psychological. Take it seriously. Talk to your doctor and to people you trust. Have someone pray for you. God's rest and good care go perfectly well together.

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.

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Rest

Listening to Him. Living from His rest.

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 rest is a gift from God and not a reward for hard work;
- how you learn to work from rest instead of for rest;
- five nudges to bring rhythm and Sabbath into your life.

At Bible school Wim Kamphorst noticed that he was going faster than God asked of him. Fasting became an emergency brake for him to step back into God's rhythm.

With personal testimonies, clear Bible passages and practical examples, this book makes clear that living from His rest is something that is close to God's heart.

God speaks.
When will you come to rest?

