

PREPARING AT HOME

January 8-14, 2018

Focus reading: 1 Samuel 3:1–10, (11–20) (<http://bible.oremus.org/?q|=380094377>)

Other lectionary readings: Psalm 139:1–6, 13–18; 1 Corinthians 6:12–20; John 1:43–51

Theme: Discerning God’s Call

I’ve heard people lament that they have not heard God’s call come loudly and clearly like it did in biblical times. Yet, even when God’s voice is audible, as it is in this week’s passage, it takes an old priest with failing vision to help Samuel understand that God is indeed calling him. The call comes at a time when God’s voice seems to be going silent. Religious and military leaders are corrupt. A military threat is looming. The people are demanding a change in their political system. While their neighbors are ruled by kings, they are ruled by judges. Why can’t they be like everyone else? The people want a king! Priest Eli’s eyes are not the only things that are going dark! His own sons are corrupt, and Eli himself is culpable. But in the middle of that dark night God’s voice comes to a young boy who does “not yet know the Lord” (verse 7). The call that comes to Samuel that night signals a shift as God’s voice comes to prophets rather than priests. It is Samuel who will anoint David as king. But that will come later. His first prophetic task is to pronounce God’s judgment on Eli, the very one who helped him discern God’s call. This call is a call to a reformation that took place long before Martin Luther was born! What happened in that sacred space where a young boy was sleeping would impact the course of history.

CALLING NEW LEADERS

Throughout history God has chosen particular leaders for particular times. Martin Luther King, Jr. is an example of one such leader. Talk with your child about King’s leadership and vision. Older children may be learning about Dr. King in school, but do they know about his background in the church and how his faith shaped his leadership? Using the Internet, search for information about King’s Baptist faith and his role as a pastor. Can you or your child think of other examples of leaders who were called by God for particular times?

HERE I AM, LORD

Look at the words to the hymn, “Here I am, Lord.” You can find them at http://www.hymnlyrics.org/mostpopularhymns/here_i_am_lord.html. How do these words remind you of Samuel’s story? How might God be calling you to do some of the same things mentioned in this song? What else might God be calling you to do?

PRAYER

Loving God,
We thank you leaders who have answered your call.
Teach us to hear your call and to
answer
“Here I am, Lord!”
Amen.

Prospect Presbyterian Church, Maplewood, NJ, www.prospectchurch.org

Rita Boyer, rita@prospectchurch.org