

**House Group Bible Study -
Hearing from God - How does it happen?**

Prepared by Mel Turner

Hearing from God – how does it happen?

Holiday Club this year featured 5 Bible stories of young folk being used marvelously by God. One of which was Samuel hearing a call from God.

What a remarkable experience to hear verbally from God; but is hearing from Him a 'still small voice' experience confined to special people?

The Old Testament is full of instances when God spoke, in different ways, to such a wide range of folk – Abraham, Moses, Gideon, Jehoshaphat, through the Psalms, Isaiah - among a multitude of others. Ezekiel says 46 times in his book that "The word of the Lord came to me"... I wonder how that happened.

Hearing from God in different ways appears in all of the 27 New Testament books and in Acts 16 the way in which Paul, being stopped by the Holy Spirit from continuing his ministry in what is now northern Turkey, heard from God in a vision of a young man (Luke?) across in Macedonia calling him, and the door of Europe opens for the Gospel – a truly historic moment. The rest is history.

So what about now and our hearing from God?

The role of the Holy Spirit is crucial. The process starts initially by the Holy Spirit convicting us that we need to be right with God – John 16v7-15 – and the Spirit then enables us to live for God. In other words, the Holy Spirit has started 'speaking' to us through our sense of conviction and our repentance leading to faith and trust in the Lord Jesus for salvation. And, oh, the sense of relief when the burden of sin is lifted!

And then God puts His stamp on things – have a look at Ephesians 1v13-14 and 2 Cor. 1v21-22 - it's clear that the Holy Spirit has the role of Counsellor for us as in John 16v7.

Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don't go away the Counsellor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you.



What does a counsellor do? Any ideas?

As the Spirit of truth and as our Counsellor the Holy Spirit is to guide the Christian into a growing understanding of the way God wants things done – John 16v13-15.

So, how does he guide us? What are the ways in which we hear from God?

Through Scripture – He regularly does that for Pat and me when we find that the day's Bible passage and the comments on it fit our situation marvelously. Heb 13v5-6 is a memorable one for us. It's so important to get to know God's Word and to read it regularly using devotional notes.

Through our times of prayer – times of listening to as well as talking with the Lord and where a picture may be given which has a significant meaning.

Through an inner awareness of the rightness or otherwise of a situation – an 'inner witness' as it is sometimes called - where a decision may be needed.

Through the way in which the Lord will stop what we intend to do and replace it with a far better result – as in Paul's crossing to Macedonia.

Through something said – maybe in a service through a song or sermon or shared in a conversation or given as a word of knowledge.

Through conscience - Sometimes the Holy Spirit will produce a check in our spirit as though he's saying "hold on, let's be clear about this – look for a confirmation of it".



...and God has given us the criteria to use for this:

the 'testimony of 2 or 3 witnesses' as in Matt 18v16

and the witness can be Scripture, someone we trust or our own judgement, as in Romans 12v2, 2Cor 13v1, 1Thess 5v19-21 and 1John 4v1 - having brought it to the Lord and asking Him about it.

And finally, have any of you experiences of hearing from the Lord that you are happy to share with us?

PS. A Counsellor – one who gives advice and guidance, recommends a course of action, one with whom to discuss a problem, someone who can equip with resourcefulness.
(Oxford Concise)