

**Cole Community Church Growth Groups  
Leader's Guide for 1 Samuel 3  
Week of September 25-30, 2011**

**Anatomy Of A Call**

It is recommended to study first and share/prayer second. Ask someone before the meeting to be prepared to share where they felt a "call" from God.

**Group Question: What does it mean to receive a "call" from God?**

Can anyone share an example of where, when, how, and why they have received a "call" from God?

Our writer identifies that there are two parallel stories taking place in 1 Samuel. One is the sins of Eli, his family, and their eventual end of the priesthood. The other story is the growth, maturing, and development of Samuel as he is called to hear and speak the words of the Lord.

There are three characters in this story: God, the old priest Eli, and the young man Samuel. To fully understand these verses, we must identify the individuality of each.

**1. God. What is this scripture telling us about God and His relationship with His people? (vs 1, 4, 10, 11, 19, 21)**

The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not common.

Men were not listening to God in those days, and God did not speak very often. God was, however, unwilling to give up on His people, "the light had not yet gone out".

God patiently kept on calling until Samuel heard and understood.

God raised up a Samuel. God always has His person or people to carry on His work. Samuel now was His man.

God diligently seeks to reveal himself to His people.

**2. Eli. How are we to understand and interpret Eli's response to the Lord speaking to Samuel his servant? (vs 8-9, 16-17, 18)**

We learn in verse 8 that Eli finally realized that the Lord was calling Samuel. Eli gives to Samuel the words to say to the Lord, "speak Lord for your servant is listening".

When the young boy Samuel sought answers to his questions, Eli was there to guide him in the right direction. Even amid all the changes that were unfolding here for the nation, the new leader born and called by God to bring new light to the people needed the guidance of the blind Eli to know how to respond and what to do. Even though the old ways were dying, Eli still had a role in guiding the new generation into their calling as God's people.

And yet, Eli enables the young Samuel to be the newness that the people so desperately need. And in Eli's quiet acceptance of the new word of God, we see gentleness and a piety, a commitment to God that will allow God to work beyond himself.

Eli was to facilitate and enable the change that God was bringing. He was the transition figure between the past and the future, the cutting edge over which the old became new.

The fact was that God had something to say to Eli, but was saying it through his servant, the child who waited on him. This could have been mortifying to Eli. It would also humble Eli the more when afterwards he found it was a message to himself, and yet sent to him by a child.

Eli has the courage to hear that word from the child, even though it is critical of his own interests. He is a model of self-effacement as he seeks to discern the way of the Lord.

**3. Samuel. This scripture give us a deep understanding of the character, attitude and desires of Samuel. What are they? (vs 1, 4-6, 8-10, 15-18, 19-21 )**

Samuel hastened out of his warm bed three times and ran to Eli, to see if he wanted anything. Perhaps Eli was not well. "Here am I," he said three times. It may have happened on several evenings that Eli has needed Samuels's assistance.

Samuel sees his family each year. One would think that he would rejoice at seeing them and be sorrowful at their returning home. Yet there is no indication in scripture that Samuel ever seeks to return home with them. Samuel seems to understand and trusts the dedication and decision his mother has made towards him.

Samuel did not know the voice of the God of Israel. Verse 7 tell us that this was the first time that the Lord had spoken to Samuel.

Samuel was willing to follow the advice of Eli in how to respond to the "voice".

Samuel was truthful to Eli, even when the news was destructive to Eli and his family.

Samuel "let none of His (the Lord's) words fall to the ground", vs 19-21. Samuel allowed the Lord to teach him, mature him, and uses him as His instrument to the people

The entire nation was aware of the hand of the Lord on Samuel, vs 19-21. The assumption is that these verses were written indicating Samuel's spiritual, emotional, social, and physical maturity.

As identified in these verses, what are the characteristics of God's call?

1. He calls us where we are and in what we are doing.
2. He calls us by name; His call is always a personal call.
- 3 He keeps calling until we know that it is Him. It is a patient call.
- 4 He will use whatever it takes to get our attention, He is persistent. In other scriptures it was a still, small voice. For others it might take a blinding light, some form of trial or tragedy that helps us realize that He is calling.

Read several different translations of vs 9-10 regarding Samuel's response. What is Samuel saying to the "voice"

What are the steps you are making (or need to make) as you seek to stay in the covenant relationship with the Lord, to listen, hear, and respond to His call?

How can we as a group pray for you as you seek to hear His voice?