



PRAYER RESOURCE

What is God saying to you?

This prayer resource is designed to be used as either a standalone prayer activity or as part of a Candidates Sunday worship service. It may be appropriate to use as a time of response if preferred too.

I don't know about you, but sometimes I need to be told things more than once as I don't always understand everything I am told the first time round. Often I need to have things repeated, or at least have time to digest what I am hearing or seeing or being asked; and to be honest, sometimes I miss the point altogether. That is, until the lightbulb comes on. Can you identify with that? Can you think of a moment when your brain kicked into gear a few seconds or a few minutes later than you would have hoped? For those of you that have seen anything of the TV series *Friends*, maybe at times you have felt a little like Joey, often catching on just a little while after everyone else (**see PowerPoint**) or at least taking time to figure it out.

Well, over the years there have been famous actors who have played the role of God in film and on screen. Charlton Heston (**see PowerPoint**), as well as playing Moses, also spoke as the voice of God in the 1956 film *The Ten Commandments*. Whoopi Goldberg even played God in the 2011 film, *A Little Bit of Heaven* (**see PowerPoint**) as well as The Boss (aka God) in *It's a Very Muppet Christmas Movie*. However, perhaps the most famous actor in recent years to play God was Morgan Freeman (**see PowerPoint**) in the 2003 hit film *Bruce Almighty* starring Jim Carrey.

Now of course, these portrayals of God were designed for the big screen. Some may have seemed more authentic in nature than others, although all of them help us to think more about God. But what does God actually sound like? How do we know when God is speaking to us? How do we recognise his voice? How do we know when he is trying to speak into our hearts and minds? I mean, I occasionally have the odd dream, but I have never yet woken up to the image of Whoopi Goldberg or Morgan Freeman trying to communicate with me!

So how does God speak? Maybe discuss with the person next to you how God speaks to you. Is it through music, dance, art, nature, creation, television, radio, through your sense of smell, taste, touch, sight and sound? You see, I believe wholeheartedly that God knows exactly how to communicate with each of us, on a unique, personal and intimate level. I also believe that he wants to communicate with all of us, including me, right now. Maybe he has a message for us, a challenge, a calling or a plea to action.

So the question has to be, what is he saying to you now? What is on your mind? What is in your heart? What is in your subconscious? What are you trying not to think about right now? Is there something you are trying to put to the back of your mind as I say this? If you are anything like me, you might be doing everything you can to avoid thinking at all right now, believing that perhaps this message is for someone else here today. I've done it all in the past – looked up at the ceiling to count the ceiling bolts, down to the floor to focus on the pattern in the carpet, closed my eyes hoping I wouldn't be noticed. My efforts were often futile though, as after all God knows all about me and knows just how best to communicate with me. So what bells are going off for you right now? What are you thinking? Could these thoughts and feelings be the still small voice of God?

In 1 Samuel Chapter 3 we read of the famous encounter that Samuel had with God, and of course how infamously Eli had one of those moments where he missed the point, or caught on only slowly to what was happening. It's interesting that the opening verse of this chapter tells how 'In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions' (NIV). You might think this is similar in the world today.

When was the last time God spoke? Well, maybe, just maybe, today is the day.

Eli was lying down in his usual place. Nothing it would appear that night seemed unusual. It was almost routine, perhaps a bit like coming to worship every Sunday. However, this night, just as with perhaps this day, it was different. It is interesting to note that immediately, when Samuel heard what he thought was Eli calling, he replied, 'Here I am; you called me' (v5). More than that, he ran to Eli, with no delay. How often do we do that? We are only too quick to respond politely to one another's requests for help or to engage in conversation with one another. However, are we as quick to respond when it is God doing the speaking, or the asking, or the calling? In verse 7, we read how Samuel had yet to have the word of the Lord revealed to him. Maybe that also describes you. Maybe God's call on your life, his will for your life, has yet to be revealed fully. You might know there's something there, a nagging feeling that God wants you to do something, but you aren't sure what. Or you might be the opposite of Samuel and know exactly what God is calling you to today. Maybe you've known all along. Or it's being revealed to you slowly, but surely.

In the story of Samuel, the call on his life was responded to when he said to the Lord: 'Speak, for your servant is listening' (v10). Maybe that is the response that God is inviting you to do just now – to respond by saying, either audibly or in your heart and in your conscience, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

In the song 'I Want to Serve the Purpose of God', it says:

'What is on your heart? Show me what to do.

Let me know your will and I will follow you.'

Maybe this is what God is asking of you right now – to ask him to tell you what is on his heart. To show you, in whatever way is unique and personal to you, what to do – where to go, who to speak to, how to follow him more in your life. To go deeper in your relationship with him and to answer his call.

The theme for this year's Candidates Sunday is 'Be Available'. So perhaps once again the question is, are you available? Or are you holding back and in fact making yourself 'unavailable' to the call of God on your life? In the TV series The Apprentice the candidates put their all into being able to do business with Lord Sugar. Well, maybe this morning, the business you need to do is not with Lord Sugar but with the Lord himself. The sweetest deal you can make is with the sweetest name you know – Jesus Christ and your Father in Heaven, who by his Spirit is calling out to you right now. Do you believe that?

So why not now take some time to respond, in your heart, with your mind, consciously, as we sing the words of the beautiful song 'Here I Am, Wholly Available' (SoF 167). The words of this song say it all: are you wholly available? Only you can answer that in your heart today. Not tomorrow, not next week – God is calling you now; how will you respond? 'Here am I, Lord. Speak, for your servant is listening'? Well, one thing is for sure, you will respond, one way or the other. However, I urge you to follow what your heart is telling you, because I have a feeling that this just might be the still small voice of God speaking to you right now.

SUGGESTED SONGS TO ACCOMPANY

- 🎵 SoF 260 'I want to serve the purpose of God'
- 🎵 SASB 1002 'I, the Lord of sea and sky' (focusing on the words of the chorus)
- 🎵 SASB 580 'Dear Lord, I do surrender' (focusing on the words of the chorus)