

Called to Serve Notes

Both of our texts this week concern calling. Calling means hearing or discerning God's voice and, in obedience to him, doing what he tells you to do. Our readings from both the Old and New Testaments show that God has been calling people since the dawn of creation, and through both Israel and the Church. Yet what do you think God is calling us - as both individuals and churches - to do today? That is the focus of our questions.

If you're interested in reading more deeply, you can have a look at a recent Church of Scotland report on the theology of calling (found at Appendix Two):

https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/107851/theological-forum.pdf

Isaiah 6:1-8

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. **2** Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. **3** And one called to another and said:

'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.'

4 The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. **5** And I said: 'Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!'

6 Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. **7** The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: 'Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.' **8** Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'

1. Read the text to yourself. Which words or images stand out to you? What might God be saying through them?
2. Have you ever felt called by God to do or say something? Was it frightening or easy for you to do it?

Luke 5

5 Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, **2** he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. **3** He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. **4** When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' **5** Simon

answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.' **6** When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. **7** So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. **8** But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!' **9** For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; **10** and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.' **11** When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

3. Which action or response of Simon Peter do you most identify with here? Why?
4. Both Isaiah and Simon Peter think their sin makes it difficult or impossible to follow God's call. How do they become worthy?
5. Do you think of 'calling' as only being related to ministers, or is it a wider idea than that?
6. Activity. Having read these passages on calling, take time in prayer to consider what you think God might be calling you to do. In addition (or alternatively) share with each other what you think others might be called to do.