

Listening for a VOICE

IT WAS THE faintest sound drifting in from the background, so soft you could barely hear it.

As the four of us sat enjoying a meal—long-time friends together—each of us subtly shifted our focus and tuned our ears to the faint noise coming from the other room.

One of the kids was crying, but whose child was it? What type of cry was it—a playful cry, or did it carry a sense of urgency?

Just then, one of our friends turned to his partner and said, 'It's our youngest; sounds like she's hurt herself, I'll go.'

When my friend returned, I asked, 'How did you know it was your youngest?'

He smiled knowingly and said, 'It's her tone. It's higher pitched than her sister's.'

It is amazing how parents can discern their child's voice over all other competing sounds, even if they can't see them.

Jesus helped those who listened to him understand what he was trying to teach them, by using word pictures from the everyday life of the people of his time.

One common story was about a shepherd and his sheep (John chapter 10, verse 16) where Jesus wanted to help people understand about learning to hear and recognise God's voice.

Jesus said he was like a shepherd who knew all of his sheep so well that the sheep recognised his voice and would follow where he led them.

A little later, Jesus reassured his followers that, even after he had physically left the Earth, he would send the Holy Spirit to teach people how to listen for and recognise God's voice, just as they had listened to his physical voice (John chapter 14, verses 25–27).

The voice of the Holy Spirit would be one that spoke with distinct tones of peace and love.

God is always speaking, and we can learn to recognise his voice. One way to 'tune in' to God is to read the Bible, and have a sense of expecting to be able to 'hear' him speak to us.

Just as it takes time for parents to learn to distinguish the individual voices of their children, it takes time to learn what God's voice is like.

Persevere, because God promises that he hears and knows your voice and will speak to you of his love and peace.

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