

25<sup>th</sup> October 2020

## Call

**“You would not have called to me  
unless I had been calling to you,’ said the Lion.”**

*C S Lewis, The Silver Chair*

On a recent holiday in the country I was wakened just after dawn by the incessant calling of a woodpigeon. “Coo-coo; coo-coo ... Coo-coo; coo-coo ... Coo-coo; coo-coo; coo ...”, this 4-4-5 call being repeated over and over again with a short pause between each section. I don’t know how long the woodpigeon sounded its call, how often it was repeated or how many people it woke up. But after a while an answer came, at a higher pitch and with a different rhythm. And, at that point, the calling of the first woodpigeon stopped. The response, it appeared, had been enough.

I’m not an ornithologist, but I suspect it’s what a woodpigeon does. It sounds a call, and keeps sounding a call, until it gets a response. I’ve no idea what happens next. But the response to the call seems to be sufficient.

In 1 Samuel 3 we read the story of the young Samuel hearing an incessant call. *This* call wakens him too, but he has no idea what it means. Over and over again it sounds, till the young man acknowledges it, and says, in effect, “OK! I get it! I hear you. I’m here!” And that is enough.

Throughout my adult life, I’ve wrestled with the concept of call. Where does it come from? What does it mean? What do I do with it? How do I respond? Is this God’s call or my imagination? When will it stop? After fifty years of trying to interpret what call means, and having heard calls many times, I have to say I am none the wiser. So what do I do when I am wakened by an incessant call? I do what Samuel did and simply say, “OK! I hear you!” and take things forward from there. My acknowledging response has to be enough. It’s as much as I can manage. And *then* I have to work at it, continue to wrestle, God and me doing our best together.

There is no definitive direction or absolute clarity. Simply to acknowledge the call is usually all I can do, and to say, “I’m here!”, like a responsive woodpigeon does naturally, just after dawn.

### **A prayer for today**

*Lord, it’s your job to call. It’s my job to listen and say, “OK!”. And it’s our job to work out together what happens next – whatever that might be. Amen*

*An original reflection by © Tom Gordon*

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