

What's in a name?

During a recent family gathering I sat watching my three year grandson playing with his Auntie Lucy and Uncle Matt. In these moments I saw a very different perspective on the importance of names.

The three year is just like his dad. Very particular. Everything must be in the right place. Doors and drawers must be closed. Has a memory I envy. Very tidy and every single item must be kept perfect. In the sweetest of ways he loves to give orders. These are dished out with precise instructions. Do not deviate for you will only be corrected. For all this there are times, true - rare, we can get a word in and give him instructions.

One aspect no one can change. His name. We used to say in an affectionate way "yes boss" "I'm Arthur" In a way we needed correcting because clearly in his mind we have forgotten his name. We cannot even shorten to AJ or Art. Arthur that is his name.

He applies the same principle to his baby brother, Oliver. When he was born Arthur finding Oli easier to say, he is known as Oli. Call him Oliver, "he's Oli" As though you have it wrong.

His dad is Matthew. I always call him Matthew. He calls himself Matt. Work colleagues Matt or Cookie.

My name is Jacqueline. Being a mouth full for both myself and my twin brother I have always been known as Jackie. Jacqueline was only boomed at me by a cross father. Husband Peter calls me Jack.

I began to wonder with many names attached to one person how does God know each of us by our name.

One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called "Samuel!, Samuel!"

And Samuel said, "Here I am". And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

Again the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son." Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

A third time the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

[1 Samuel 3:2-10]

I know I am not the only Jacqueline, Jackie or Jack. Any more than Arthur is unique. Well, he is unique by his character not name alone.

It is in our uniqueness that I have come to understand how God knows each one of us by name.

While our name in whatever form we chose stays the same. It is our character that constantly changes. God calls through our identity. When we hear this name we have that opportunity to listen to God's will.

"Here I am Lord, speak your servant is listening. Send me"

Listening "In the Name of Jesus; friend, shepherd, teacher, King, sister, brother, mother, father, Lord, master. In the name of forgiveness, obedience, prayer, relevance, ministry, healing, popularity. In the name of questions, examples, challenges and joys. An endless list of being led "In the Name of Jesus".

Whatever you need this day I invite you to begin with Jesus. Conclude with your heart saying "yes" "So be it"

In the name of Jesus, I pray



Amen