

How Hannah prays (before the birth of Samuel)

1 Samuel 1: 1-20

Christ Church: 23rd February 2025

Brief summary of the passage:

Hannah's story is found in 1 Samuel 1 but goes through to Chapter 2: vs. 1-10: her thanksgiving prayer.

Hannah was one of two wives of Elkanah. The other wife, Peninnah had many children but Hannah was barren and Peninnah had been provoking her for years. At the tabernacle in Shiloh, Hannah pours out her heart to God to give her a son. Because of how she's praying Eli, the priest, thinks she's drunk and scolds her. Then, touched by her pain, he pronounces blessing over her - "Go in peace and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of Him" (v.17).

Later on, Hannah gives birth to Samuel.

Some things to think about (for Connect groups and others)

Icebreaker question: Has anyone been to a big worship 'event' ?

What did you enjoy? Do you remember praying there?

Read 1 Samuel verses 1-20:

From the introduction v.1-8

1 What do we learn about Elkanah? Is he a good man?

2 What is the main thing we learn about Hannah?

Why is Hannah's situation particularly harrowing?

3 What specific words describe Hannah's unhappiness? (vs.7-8)

Verses 9-16

Pray like Hannah... and come as you are

1 Describe how Hannah arrived at the Tabernacle. Did she try and make herself more presentable?

2 What did she care about?/What didn't she care about?

3 "Honesty's more precious than eloquence" (words from the sermon) - explain what is meant by this.

4 Jesus in Matthew 6: 5-8 advises us to Pray Secretly, Pray Simply and Pray Sincerely. (Deli's sermon). Would you agree Hannah does these 3 things?

5 Find verses that describe Hannah coming boldly, vulnerably, humbly and with expectancy.

6 Let's think of a time when we poured out our soul before the Lord because of a difficult situation, has Hannah taught us anything new?

Is there a barrenness in our lives we need to shout about?

Pray like Hannah... and worship first

Oswald Chambers (Scottish evangelist and writer) says "we have to pray with our eyes on God, not on the difficulties". Hannah begins her prayer by

addressing God with the title “Lord Almighty” or “Lord of Hosts” (other Bible versions) - which has the idea of Lord of Almighty Armies.”

1 Why is it good to begin prayer with worship?

2 Do we sense we come “before” God when we pray?

3 Do we know other names for God? eg. Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Rapha and their characteristics. Is this useful today?

4 What are some of the things we can be doing to gain a bigger picture of God?

Pray like Hannah ...and offer back the gifts God gives

Read again the key verse – verse 11.

1 What request did Hannah make to God? What do you notice about the language of how she frames her plea?

2 What did she promise, if God answered her?

3 What was significant about no razor being used on her son’s head?
(Numbers 6:1-6 gives more info).

4 What phrases indicate Hannah’s sincerity? (v12. 15 and 16)

5 Practically speaking, what should it look like for Christians to dedicate their children to God in our century and culture?

6 To what extent do we consider everything is a gift? How does this affect attitudes to money, time, talents, health, relationships suffering?

(can suffering be a gift)?

Some additional questions

- 1 If we recorded our prayers for a week and played them back what would be their content?
2. Does talking to God get pushed down the list/to what extent do we self-medicate, finding solace in other things?
- 2 How does Hannah help us understand God?
- 3 How does Hannah's story speak of the power of persistence in prayer?
- 4 How did waiting on God affect Hannah's faith?
- 5 Have you been in a situation a long, long time when suddenly something changed?
- 6 Our title for this series is "God is not a slot machine; I am not a robot. How does Hannah's story illustrate these two statements?
- 7 How was Hannah's act of 'giving back the gift' a foreshadowing of what God did for us in Christ?
- 8 In what ways can we demonstrate our devotion to God this week?

Some useful scriptures

Confidence: Hebrews 4 :16

Hear my cry: Psalm 61

Perseverance in prayer: Luke 18:1-8

Motives: James 4:3

Anxiety: 1 Peter 5:7