

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 20 September 2026

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 98:1-3

Opening Hymn: 270 At the Name of Jesus

Confession of Sin

Most holy and merciful Father; We acknowledge and confess before You; Our sinful nature prone to evil and slothful in good; And all our shortcomings and offenses. You alone know how often we have sinned; In wandering from Your ways; In wasting Your gifts; In forgetting Your love. But You, O Lord, have pity upon us; Who are ashamed and sorry for all wherein we have displeased You. Teach us to hate our errors; Cleanse us from our secret faults; And forgive our sins for the sake of Your dear Son. And O most holy and loving Father; Help us we beseech You; To live in Your light and walk in Your ways; According to the commandments of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Romans 4:20-25

Psalm of Preparation: 30 O LORD, I Will Extol You

Old Covenant Reading: 1 Samuel 1:21-2:11

New Covenant Reading: Luke 1:46-55

Sermon Title: *A Response to God's Gift*

Hymn of Response: 301 Song of Mary

Confession of Faith: Ten Commandments

Gloria Patri (Hymn 572)

Closing Psalm: 103B O Bless the LORD with All My Soul

PM Worship

172 Speak, O Lord

193 Baptized into Your Name Most Holy

231 What'er My God Ordains is Right

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 17:1-7

New Covenant Reading: Luke 4:1-13

Sermon Title: *Role Reversal: Israel Tests Yahweh*

Suggested Preparations

Monday (9/14) Read and discuss 1 Samuel 1:21–2:11.

The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the LORD and dwell there forever.” Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the LORD establish his word.” So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. And the child was young.

Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. And she said, “Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD.”

And he worshiped the LORD there.

And Hannah prayed and said,

“My heart exults in the LORD;
 my horn is exalted in the LORD.
My mouth derides my enemies,
 because I rejoice in your salvation.

“There is none holy like the LORD:
 for there is none besides you;
 there is no rock like our God.
Talk no more so very proudly,
 let not arrogance come from your mouth;
for the LORD is a God of knowledge,
 and by him actions are weighed.
The bows of the mighty are broken,
 but the feeble bind on strength.
Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
 but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.
The barren has borne seven,
 but she who has many children is forlorn.
The LORD kills and brings to life;
 he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
The LORD makes poor and makes rich;
 he brings low and he exalts.
He raises up the poor from the dust;
 he lifts the needy from the ash heap
to make them sit with princes
 and inherit a seat of honor.
For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’s,
 and on them he has set the world.

“He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
 but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness,
 for not by might shall a man prevail.
The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces;
 against them he will thunder in heaven.
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth;

he will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed.”

Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli the priest. (ESV)

Rich Phillips writes:

In its promotional materials, the United States Marine Corps communicates its desire for quality over quantity. All the Marines are looking for is “a few good men.” There are times in the Bible when it seems that a few good men and women is all God has at His disposal. But what a difference even a few committed believers can make, by His power, in a dark time. So it was with the birth of the child Samuel, who would grow up to be one of Israel’s greatest leaders. A story that began with a humble priestly family who appeared before the LORD to worship leads to much greater events as God answers Hannah’s prayer and so meets Israel’s need.

So far, so good, we might say regarding Hannah. Arriving at the tabernacle with the grief of childlessness on her heart, Hannah turned to the LORD for help. Afflicted by the mean-spirited barbs of her rival co-wife, Hannah prayed not for vengeance but for a son whom she might offer to God. Instead of stuffing her heart with bitterness and resentment, Hannah poured out her soul before the LORD. And when Eli, speaking ... in his office as high priest, gave words of benediction over her prayer, Hannah received it as God’s answer and went home with peace and joy. Since God responded by providing Hannah with her cherished son, we might say that her approach “worked.” Indeed, Hannah does provide a model of effective prayer, however God may choose to respond. Most importantly, humble and prayerful Hannah possessed just the kind of believing heart that God always looks for and is pleased to bless for the sake of many others.

But now, at the end of this opening chapter, these critical questions remain: Will Hannah make good on her promise to the LORD? Will she fulfill her vow to consecrate her little son in lifelong service to God? Or will she see things differently once the baby boy is rocking in her arms? Were Hannah to hedge on her vow – a promise made under duress but forgotten once the trouble passed – she would not be the first and certainly not the last to do so. Perhaps God would understand if she adjusted her promise to allow little Samuel to serve the LORD at home in Ramah. Perhaps she would now think it best to devote more time to spiritually nurture the child and allow him to make his own decision.

As we wonder about Hannah’s response to her son’s birth, we should inquire about God’s attitude toward solemn vows made to Him. The Bible answers:

“When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. ... Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?” (Eccl. 5:4,6). It turns out that God takes our vows most seriously. Vows made to God – including marriage vows, ordination vows, church membership vows, and oaths of office – should be made soberly and with mature judgment. Ecclesiastes continues, “It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay” (Eccl. 5:5). For this reason, vows “should not be entered into by those who are immature and do not have the means to carry out the intents of their hearts (Cyril J. Barber).” Hannah’s actions suggest that she was mature and that she made her vow to God in sober judgment and honest intent. Because of this, what she began well in prayer she now concludes well in action, as she follows through in offering her son to the LORD.

Read or sing Hymn 270 At the Name of Jesus

Tuesday (9/15) Read and discuss Read and discuss 1 Samuel 1:1-20.

There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD. On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb. And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, “Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?”

After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. And she vowed a vow and said, “O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.”

As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. And Eli said to her, “How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you.” But Hannah answered, “No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in

spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation.” Then Eli answered, “Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him.” And she said, “Let your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, “I have asked for him from the LORD.” (ESV)

Rich Phillips writes:

Hannah rose and went toward the tabernacle, where Eli was sitting on his high-priestly chair. But Hannah was not seeking Eli; she was seeking the LORD in prayer. Her prayer is a model for us, starting with the simple fact that *she turned to the LORD in her need*. This may seem surprising, given that it was the LORD who had closed her womb, as Hannah knew. Many people will turn away from God when feeling His hand of affliction, or else simply resign themselves to their fate. Christians sometimes advise friends in such a situation simply to move on and give thanks to God for the trial. We should be thankful to God for everything, even trials, but that does not mean we should be resigned to our situation! The apostle James gives better advice: “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray” (James 5:13). Of all the things Hannah might have done – become angry or bitter, fretting in tears, or reviling the LORD – she did the very best thing. She simply went to the LORD in prayer for her need.

Read or sing Psalm 30 O LORD, I Will Extol You

Wednesday (9/16) Read and discuss Luke 1:46–55

And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.” (ESV)

In verse 46, Mary says:

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”

Mary’s song is about making much of God. But what does it mean to “magnify the LORD”? We use that term magnify in at least two different ways. We magnify something through a microscope to make something small look big. And we magnify something through a telescope, to bring into focus something that is genuinely enormous – but which had appeared small because we were not close to it.

Mary’s soul and spirit are not acting like microscopes. Instead, when Mary focuses on the LORD she is just overwhelmed by His majesty, His power, and particularly by His grace so that she simply must declare her experience of God’s majesty and grace. Look closely at the way the two clauses in these verses fit together: “My soul magnifies the LORD, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.” There is a direct connection between being overwhelmed by the grandeur and majesty of God and true joy. Put simply: **The bigger your God, the deeper your joy.**

Read or sing Hymn 301 Song of Mary

Thursday (9/17) Read and discuss Luke 4:1–13

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” And Jesus answered him, “It is written,

“‘You shall worship the Lord your God,
and him only shall you serve.’”

And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written,

“‘He will command his angels concerning you,
to guard you,’

and

“‘On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”

And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”
And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. (ESV)

David Garland writes:

From a biblical point of view, the tests Jesus faced are not simply those common to humanity. They applied specifically to His vocation as the Son of God. The devil sought to entice “Jesus to a selfish misuse of His filial prerogative and thus to a compromise of His Messianic vocation (Neagoe).” Gibson states, “What the Devil is trying to win from Jesus with his challenges to Jesus is a denial that the particular pattern of Sonship to which Jesus has committed Himself is truly what God had in mind for His Son.” The devil tried to convince Jesus that God wanted something better for Him than what self-denial would bring: “You need to serve yourself, take power, claim the promises as someone who is special!”

Since Luke traces Jesus’ genealogy back to Adam, who is identified as the son of God in 3:38, the parallels with the temptation of Adam that led to the fall are evident.

- Jesus obeys God and remains faithful to God whereas Adam, and later Israel, failed. The human fall was caused by disobedience.
- Adam yielded to the temptation to eat certain foods that he and his wife were forbidden to eat. Jesus as the Son of God prized obedience to God over satisfying his hunger and remained a faithful son by not eating.
- Adam was given dominion over the world but was tempted to seize even more and become like God. Jesus did not seek power or a kingdom for himself.
- Adam risked disobeying the command of God because of the promise that he and his wife would not die. Jesus refused the devil’s challenge to test His promised invulnerability by jumping off the pinnacle of the temple and put God to the test. He will accept His mission that brings death.

- Adam lost paradise. Jesus can tell a repentant sinner that he will share paradise with Him (Luke 23:43).

Friday (9/18) Read and discuss Exodus 17:1–7

All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?” But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” So Moses cried to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” And the LORD said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?” (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

How can we get water? I guess we could get a staff, but it can't be any ordinary, run-of-the-mill kind of staff. It must be *the* staff. Moses' staff. The staff that goes back and forth from a stick to a snake. The staff that struck the Nile River and turned its water into blood. The staff that stretched over the Red Sea to divide its waters so Israel could walk through on dry land.

Hold on! Why does Moses still have his staff in Exodus 17? Because the same divine power that saved Israel from Egypt is still with Israel in the desert. Yahweh is Lord of the Nile. Yahweh is Lord of the Sinai wilderness. Yahweh is Lord of heaven and earth.

Yahweh commands Moses, “Take in your hand the staff and strike the rock and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” Moses did. Water flowed. And the Israelites lived. Asaph even includes the miracle in one of his psalms: “He split rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep. He made streams come out of the rock and cause waters to flow down like rivers” (Psalm 78:15-16 ESV).

Read or sing Psalm 103B O Bless the LORD with All My Soul

Saturday (9/19) Read and discuss 1 Samuel 1:21–2:11

The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the LORD and dwell there forever." Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the LORD establish his word." So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. And the child was young. Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD."

And he worshiped the LORD there.

And Hannah prayed and said,

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My mouth derides my enemies,
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Talk no more so very proudly,
let not arrogance come from your mouth;
for the LORD is a God of knowledge,
and by him actions are weighed.
The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble bind on strength.
Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.
The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is forlorn.
The LORD kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
The LORD makes poor and makes rich;
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He raises up the poor from the dust;
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For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's,

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“He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness,
for not by might shall a man prevail.
The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces;
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The LORD will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed.”

Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli the priest. (ESV)

Rich Phillips writes:

We can perceive the spiritual unity that joined the hearts of Elkanah and Hannah as husband and wife. This was revealed when Elkanah prepared to depart for Shiloh but Hannah declined to join him: “Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, ‘As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the LORD and dwell there forever.’” Elkanah understood Hannah’s motives and supported her understanding of what was required to fulfill her vow. Under the law, a vow made by a wife needed to be confirmed by her husband (Num. 30:10-15). Elkanah was glad to do this: “Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the LORD establish His word.” It is unclear what he meant by asking the LORD to “establish His word.” Most likely, Elkanah joined Hannah in taking the high priest’s benediction as divine confirmation of Hannah’s prayer, and he generally agreed with her in seeing God’s sovereign purpose in Hannah’s circumstances.

In like manner, any home is blessed when the husband and wife live in spiritual companionship. Couples should seek a shared sense of purpose in their worship and Christian service. As either is led to undertake special giving or ministry, the two should collaborate in their family’s service to God. This is possible only when husband and wife join together in the Word of God and in prayer, being evenly yoked in their spiritual walk and providing mutual support for the sanctification and service of each.

Husbands, having received spiritual headship in the family, should be especially keen to perceive the gifts and ministry callings of their wives. The bible’s mandate for male leadership in the church and home does not limit the full partnership of women in the work of both. The Bible is filled with Spirit-filled and gifted women who make vital contributions to God’s work, Hannah herself providing an eminent example. Elkanah seems to

have understood the extraordinary role Hannah was playing, and rather than being defensive or resentful, he accommodated himself to support her fully. Let us not forget that Samule was Elkanah's son as well as Hannah's; so highly did he value the spiritual contributions of his wife that he did not oppose the gift of his son to the LORD. Christian men today should likewise be keen to foster important Christian service from women, in accordance with the gender pattern given in God's Word, and to look upon our daughters and wives as vital partners in the work of the LORD.

Prayer: Please lift up tomorrow's morning and evening worship services.