

# 1 Samuel 1:1-28

## Humble prayer fosters dependence on God and submission to His will.

**ICEBREAKER:** As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion. What has brought you the most joy in the past few years? The most grief? What brought relief from your grief?

When things go wrong, to whom do you immediately turn? What is your initial attitude?

**Interpret:** **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 SAMUEL 1:1-19.** At the beginning of 1 Samuel, we read about Hannah, Samuel's mother, a woman who found herself in a desperate situation: she was childless (1:2). In Old Testament times, a woman's primary role in life was bearing children for her husband. Infertility equaled failure in other people's eyes. As if infertility weren't bad enough, Hannah was also taunted by her husband's other wife Peninnah (vv. 4-7). (It's important to note that polygamy was never God's plan for marriage but had become culturally acceptable in Old Testament times.) Hannah's despair over the entire situation led her soul to become bitter, or "deeply hurt" (v. 10). How does the list of Elkanah's ancestry (v. 1) underscore Hannah's plight? Why is a child so dear to her? What responses did Hannah's childlessness evoke in her? In Elkanah? In Peninnah? How do you tend to respond to God when He seems to say no to your prayers? 1 of 4 Instead of camping in her bitterness and blaming God, Hannah voiced an honest, vulnerable prayer to Him (v. 11). She pled with God to give her a son and, in return, she would give him back to God for His service. Before God answered her prayer, Hannah dedicated her life and her child's life to God. Her prayers acknowledged that if she were to have a child, it would be in God's control. Hannah wanted a child not for her needs, but for God's glory.

### Questions:

Read verse 11 again.

1. What stands out to you about the details of Hannah's prayer? What attributes of God does she specifically mention? What did Hannah intend for her son by her vow? What does this reveal about her?
2. Why is it significant that Hannah surrendered her future child to lifetime service to God? As a parent, what sacrifices would this require of her? Why would it be worth it?

As she prayed, Hannah captured some of God's attributes, including His greatness and sovereignty. Then she asked God to look upon her sorrow.

Finally, she told God that she wasn't asking for a child to benefit her, but for ministry in the temple as a Nazarite (lay priest). She offered her not-yet-conceived child to God for His purposes in the world. As we'll see in the next set of verses, God chose to answer her prayer, and she became the mother of Samuel, the last judge and first prophet in Israel. Samuel bore the responsibility of anointing David as king, and he is listed among the greats of the faith in Hebrews 11:32. Hannah asked God to look upon her sorrow, and He did.

3. What does it mean to you that the Creator of the universe cares about you enough to answer your prayers? What avenues do we sometimes take instead of taking our heartbreak and desperation to the Lord? Why turn to God first? Have someone read verse 18 again. How does this description of Hannah compare to verse 10?

4. What do you think it means to depend on God through prayer? It is easy for Christians to forsake their dependence on God. Do we not believe God can work as He did in the days of Scripture?

When we submit to God's Will and follow His lead, no person or society can stop God's church. As believers, we need a disposition of humble communication with God for spiritual transformation.

**Interpret:** **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 SAMUEL 1:20-28.** Confidence in God doesn't mean we're free from struggle. It means that we can live in hope and anticipation of how God will work in us. After Samuel was weaned, Hannah brought him back to Eli the priest to fulfill her promise to God. He was probably around 3 years old at that time. Faithfulness and obedience to God meant Hannah had to give back to Him what she wanted most—her child.

**Questions:**

1. How did Hannah view the things God gave her? Is this the same view you have? Why or why not?
2. What does lifelong service to God (v. 28) look like in your life? If you are a parent, is this an honest desire you have for your children? Hannah's confidence in God not only gave her hope in her desperate situation, but also created in her a desire to sacrifice to God. Her prayer was answered, and she gave the answer to her prayer back to God.
3. What things or people in your life are most indispensable to you? Can you give them back to God as Hannah did?
4. What would that require of you? Think about the gifts you give to God. Do they cost you little or are they true sacrifices? Why is sacrifice important in our relationship with God?

**Apply**

1. What do you find most difficult about letting go and relying on God through prayer?
2. Why do difficult times make us aware of our need for God? Share about a time when you've seen this awareness in your life.
3. How can you use prayer to remind you of God's past faithfulness, grace, and favor in your life? **PRAY** Come together as a group in prayer, acknowledging God's sovereignty. Give your group members the opportunity to spend quiet time in prayer, asking God to meet them in their most desperate situations.