

1 SAMUEL 1
MAY 8, 2022



INTRODUCTION

Direct students to organize themselves from youngest to oldest without speaking. Once they accomplish the task, ask: What would have made this activity easier? Point out that effective communication is essential to doing certain things.

The same thing is true about prayer. While it's true that there is no magical set of words, place, or posture for prayer, there is an attitude that God desires us to have when we pray. In 1 Samuel 1, we find a woman whose humility and sense of desperation led her to a life-changing encounter with the Lord in prayer.

DISCUSSION

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 SAMUEL 1:1-28.

How did Hannah respond to her childlessness? How did Elkanah respond?
How did Peninnah respond?

Would you say Hannah's words in verse 11 were a bargain with God or a demonstration of faith? Why?

How do you tend to respond when God seems to say no to your prayers?
When has that happened?

Hannah asked God to look upon her sorrow, and He did. What does it mean to you that the Creator of the universe cares about you enough to answer your prayers?

Why don't we always turn to God first? Why should we?

What can you learn from Hannah's example in verses 20-28?

How did Hannah view the things God gave her? Do you have this same perspective? Why or why not?

When God intervenes in your life and answer your prayers, do you typically recognize this and praise Him for it? Why or why not?

Why do you think many of us “forget” about God once He answers our prayers? What does this tendency reveal about us?

GOING DEEPER

What situation are you facing right now that is causing you stress? Write a prayer giving the situation to God. Read the prayer daily to remind yourself of your determination to let God work in and through the situation.

APPLICATION

Where do you need to boldly ask the Lord for your heart’s desire, waiting for Him to respond according to His perfect will and timing?

What do you find most difficult about letting go and relying on God through prayer?

How do difficult times make us aware of our need for God? Share about a time when you’ve seen this awareness in your life.

PRAYER

Thank God for the ways He blesses you even when your circumstances are not what you want. Confess your tendency to fail to trust Him fully. Ask Him to increase your faith, so that you might entrust your whole life to His will.

COMMENTARY

1 SAMUEL 1

1:2. The name Hannah means “grace.” She was childless, a condition often viewed with disfavor or even anguish (Gen 16:4-5; 30:1; Lk 1:24-25).

1:3. Shiloh was centrally located about 30 miles north of Jerusalem. It was the place from which Joshua divided the land among the tribes (Jos 18:1-10).

1:5. The “double portion” was the amount of the inheritance the firstborn received (Dt 21:17). Here it probably denotes Elkanah’s special love for Hannah.

1:6. The rivalry between Hannah and Peninnah finds parallels in the accounts of Sarah and Hagar (Gen 16:4-5) and Leah and Rachel (Gen 30:14-16).

1:10. The words “deeply hurt” can be more literally rendered “bitter of soul,” using the same Hebrew word that Naomi used (mara; Ru 1:20).

1:11. If God would give Hannah a son, she vowed to give him back to God according to the law of the Nazirite (Num 6:1-21).

1:12-14. Eli misread Hannah’s anguish as drunkenness and scolded her for her apparent disregard of the holy place.

1:15-16. Hannah immediately clarified the situation with Eli. The “depth” (lit “abundance”) of Hannah’s anguish and resentment over her situation had come to the surface.

1:18. The Hebrew word for favor with which Hannah replied was a shortened form of her own name.

1:19. Ramah lay along the major north-south highway five miles north of Jerusalem in the territory of Benjamin. The tender words “the Lord remembered her” remind the reader that ultimately it is God who brings new life within the womb. In the OT, to “remember” means not simply to think about someone but to act on their behalf.

1:20. The name Samuel may be a wordplay meaning “requested from God.” A second possibility is the meaning “heard by God.”

1:21. The expression “annual sacrifice” literally means “sacrifice of the days” and probably designates one of the three required festivals—Passover, the Festival of Weeks, or the Festival of Booths (Dt 16:16). The word “vow” may denote a separate vow that Elkanah had made, or perhaps it designates Hannah’s vow that Elkanah then shared with her when he heard of it (Num 30:10-15).

1:23. The Hebrew verb translated “confirm” literally means “cause to stand.” Elkanah wanted God’s blessing to remain on the young boy Samuel.

1:24. The Masoretic Text, overall the most reliable Hebrew manuscript tradition, reads “three bulls” here. The HCSB adopted “three-year-old bull” because of the reference to a single bull in verse 25 and because of the testimony of other early manuscripts. If the Masoretic Text is correct, however, it may be that the one bull constituted Elkanah’s sacrifice of thanksgiving for Samuel’s birth, while the other two were part of his usual sacrifice, and hence were not mentioned in verse 25.

1:26-27. Hannah thought it important to testify to Eli, Israel’s high priest, how God had answered her prayer.

1:28. The Hebrew words translated “give” and “given” are related to the Hebrew word for “requested,” which also has to do with the meaning of Samuel’s name (v.