

One BRMC Small Group Study

The Giving Mother

Leader's Guide

Please note that this study guide accompanies the pulpit sermon on 10 May 2020. The suggestions below are not model answers but to help guide your study.

Scripture Passage:

Key passage: 1 Samuel 1:27-28

Supplementary passages: 1 Samuel 1:1-2:11

Context:

On the occasion of Mother's Day, it is a celebration of the role mothers and persons in a mothering role (including fathers and persons in a fathering role) play in discipling children; and an encouragement to pray for our children, model for our children and present our children to the Lord. The lessons that can be learned apply to us even if we are not parents or in a parenting role.

Hannah was barren, downhearted and she prayed with deep anguish to the Lord. Her prayers were answered, a son was given to her. She responded in gratitude and kept her vows to give her son in service of the Lord.

Lesson Objectives:

In this lesson, we are encouraged to:

- Give ourselves to prayer.
- Give ourselves as models.
- Give our children to the Lord.

Introductory

1. In 1 Samuel 1:1-11, why was Hannah in deep anguish? What was her response to her anguish?
 - Hannah was in anguish because she was barren (God had closed her womb) and was provoked to irritation by her rivals (v5-6).
 - She may also have been in anguish because she was not able to give her husband a child, which may have prompted her husband's response of care and reassurance (v8).
 - Hannah responded by going to the Lord, praying in deep anguish, weeping bitterly (v9-10).
 - In her prayer, Hannah made a vow to the Lord (v11). While the focus of this question is on Hannah's prayer, the content of the prayer is also significant. Why did Hannah include a vow in her prayer? Was it to emphasise the seriousness of her commitment to God? Was it to emphasise that the objective of her prayer was affirmation from God of His favour towards her?

2. From 1 Samuel 1:17 to 1 Samuel 2:11, Hannah's behaviour and responses reveal much about her faith and relationship with the Lord. Identify at least 3 instances that tell of her faith and relationship.
- At v18 after Eli's blessing, she went her way, ate something, and her face was no longer downcast (cf v7 and v8). Was she confident that God had heard her and therefore was able to put aside her anguish and grief?
 - At v20, she names the boy Samuel "Because I asked the Lord for him." Samuel sounds like the Hebrew for heard by God (1 Sam 1:20 note b in the NIV). Was this in response to her belief that God did hear her prayers at the temple?
 - At v21, 22, 23, Hannah and her husband are in the process of seeking to fulfil their vows – and they are united in their decision. However, there is a consequence of fulfilling the vow concerning Samuel of giving him away and imposing a harsh new reality for him away from home. To surrender the very person that you have asked God for - is this done out of duty, fear, obedience, faith or something else?
 - At v23, Hannah continues to nurse Samuel until he is weaned. Does this suggest that Hannah showed faithfulness in continuing in her mothering role until an aspect of that role was completely fulfilled before leading Samuel to his next season at the temple?
 - At v24-28, Hannah and her husband bring Samuel to the temple. She "... give[s] him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord." Does this reveal her commitment to and relationship with God?
 - At 2:1-11, she sings unto the Lord a song of praise and gratitude. She acknowledges all that the Lord has done for her.

Reflection

3. Hannah's response to anguish and grief was to go to the Lord and pray. She did not fulfil her basic needs, like to eat, she did not concern herself with how she might appear to others (appearing like one who is drunk). Can you share an instance where you have been provoked or were in anguish or grief? Did you go to God and pray before fulfilling other needs? Would you forsake appearances for sincere petition?
- For parents or those in a parenting role, this is an opportunity to reflect on our priorities when confronted with issues concerning our children.
 - For those who are not in a parenting role, the same may be applied to issues of concern that we may face. Where are our priorities?
 - Do we focus on the problems, conflicts, issues or do we go to the One Living and Almighty God?
 - And when we do go to God, is it after we have fulfilled other practical or basic needs, or are we consumed by the need to go before God, leaving aside even hunger?
 - Or are we more concerned with how we present our petitions (the outward concerns), maybe even embarrassed to come before the altar to seek prayer? Should we follow how Hannah went, raw and unconcerned about appearances, to our Lord in prayer?

4. Why was Hannah able to attribute the birth of her son to God answering her prayers (as opposed to just coincidence)? How was she able to give her only son to the Lord for the rest of the boy's life?
- This may seem like a strange reflection, but it is an opportunity to explore the issue of faith. Often we pray for a particular thing, then we use our human efforts to bring that desired thing to pass with our best endeavours, and when it does come to pass, do we really believe that it was from God?
 - What are some of these things? A job we desire, then we do our best to prepare for the interview, prepare our CV, maybe even lobby for it – and when we do get the job, do we honestly believe that it was given by God?
 - In Hannah's case, she was willing to give back to God that which she was in anguish and grief over, and desired the most. For your job, which you had desired so much, would you be willing to give it back to God?
 - For parents, how about that school or the grades, or that coveted place in the gifted programme? Would you be willing to actually give it to God once it is given to you?
 - What does that say about your fundamental understanding of the process of answered prayer and what you have received? What response actually acknowledges the Giver more than the gift?
5. Hannah and her husband modelled faithful commitment to God, devotion to God and gratitude to God for answered prayer. Does your life model faithful commitment to God, devotion to God and gratitude to God for answered prayer?
- This is an opportunity to share how we can be a role model for others. Through prayer, faith, devotion and gratitude.
 - Share examples of petitions that have been brought to God. Share why those petitions were offered. what was God's response? What was your response?
 - Perhaps it is our response to the yet to be answered prayers that may provide the best model for faith, devotion and gratitude.

Application

6. Hannah and her husband provide an example of giving themselves to prayer, giving themselves as models and giving to God their child. Each of us can also endeavour to follow in their example for our children and for future generations in our church. What steps can you take to follow their example to disciple our future generations?
- a. Giving yourself to prayer?
- o Would you commit to give yourself to pray for your children, and our future generations?
 - o When you are provoked, in anguish or grief, can you make God your first port of call, wholeheartedly, raw and unabashedly?

- Would you put all other needs aside, leave where you are at, and go towards God and lay your heart out to Him?
- Would you put aside your embarrassment and go to the altar and receive pastoral prayer as Hannah did?
- Would you respond as Hannah did?

b. Giving yourself as a model?

- o Would you give yourself to be a model of a disciple of Christ, for your children, and our future generations to emulate and follow?
- Hannah's response and behaviour, including the words she spoke model faith, devotion, and her desire to honour the Giver more than the gift.
- Are you willing to emulate and be a model for your children and for others in the community?
- What impact might Hannah's behaviour have had on her rivals? Provoking her because she did not have a child, then witnessing her giving her child to the service of God?

c. Giving our children to God?

- o Would you give your children, and our future generations to God, in faith, for God to build them, mould them and use them?
- For parents or those in a parenting role, what are some practical steps you can take to surrender or give your child to the Lord?
- For those not in such roles, children also represent what is precious to us, our parents, our spouse, some other person. What does it look like to give them to the Lord?

Prayer

7. Write out a prayer for yourself based on what you have heard and learned from this session.

(a) What is in your heart for yourself?

- Are you being provoked, in anguish or grief? Perhaps you can affirm God's presence and protection and provision by praying and believing in the words of Psalm 23.

(b) What is in your heart for others?

- Perhaps you feel led to pray for those who are precious to you, your family, your children, your friends. Give them to the Lord:

“Merciful Father, I thank you for *(name/s of family and/or friend/s)* Lord I trust that you are Sovereign over their life. I surrender *(name/s of family and/or friend/s)* to you and rely on Your promise that You will cause all things to work for the good of those who love You and are called according to Your purposes. Give me wisdom as to how to minister to them and show them how much You love them. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

- It is always useful to collate these prayers and to refer to them for thanksgiving and sharing next week.