



# FIRST LIGHT CHURCH

# SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Date: 5/8/22

Series: Mother's Day

Text: 1 Samuel 1:21-18

**BIG IDEA: The influence of a discipling mother**

**ICEBREAKER:** What have mothers modeled to you over the years?

**CONTEXT:** Today we're going to look at an incredible story of how God used a mother to model service and sacrifice. Hannah was the first of two wives for Elkanah, which brought much conflict in their family. Hannah was unable to have children but Elkanah's other wife Peninnah was, which was very painful for Hannah. Hannah cries out to the Lord at the Tent of Meetings and is blessed by Eli the Priest. The Lord hears her prayer, and she has a son named Samuel.

**PASSAGE:** Have a volunteer read 1 Samuel 1:21-28.

## **DISCUSSION:**

1. From verses 22-23, what does Hannah teach us about motherhood?
2. Hannah knew her time was limited with Samuel. How do you think that impacted her?
3. Why is it important for all of us to embrace a similar mindset when it comes to relationships, whether that's a parent/child, mentor/mentee, or any other kind of relationship?
4. How does Hannah model responsibility in verses 24-25?
5. Hannah shows her gratitude to the Lord by providing an extravagant offering to the Lord. How can we express our gratitude in a similar way?
6. In verse 26-28, Hannah is recalling to Eli how the Lord has answered her prayers. What impact do you think that had on Hannah's faith in God?
7. What is some of the evidence that God has been at work in your life and family?
8. What encourages and challenges you from Hannah's example?

## **APPLICATION:**

9. For moms, what do you need to model to your children?
10. Hannah's story reminds us of how challenging motherhood can be. How can you be an encouragement and support to moms?

## **K4 CONNECTION:**

Being a mom is both extremely rewarding and extremely difficult, as we see from Hannah's story. We as a faith family have the privilege and responsibility to go into our community to love, encourage, and support moms. We can do this by sharing the hope of the gospel with moms and by showing them the love of Jesus through our words and deeds. Who are the moms God has placed in your life, and how can you influence them to follow Jesus?

## **CARE AND PRAY:**

- Pray for the moms in your group and in your life.
- Share any requests or needs with the group.

## COMMENTARY

“The story of the institution of kingship in Israel does not begin with the birth of the one destined to become king. Instead, it begins with the birth of one who will become, albeit with a measure of reluctance, the kingmaker in Israel. The focus on Samuel’s birth contrasts with the description of Saul’s or David’s. We would really like to know the identity of David’s mother, for instance, but she is not named in the narrative or referenced at all. Samuel’s mother, however, plays a key role in the movement of the Lord’s purpose for His people, and the circumstances of her life clearly demonstrate the function of prayer in the life of the faithful.”

**[v.21]** As the time for the family’s annual pilgrimage to Shiloh approaches, Elkanah continues his normal practice of taking “all his house” with him to the sanctuary. We do not know precisely what the phrase “to pay his vow” refers to. It may be a thank offering for the birth of his son, or perhaps is related to some aspect of the vow Hannah made and to which he acquiesced. However, the context suggests that Elkanah’s annual visit is the product of a solemn vow he has previously made. “Greeks” refers to Gentiles, not necessarily to people from Greece (see note on 7:35). They are “God-fearers,” non-Jews who had come to Jerusalem to worship at the Jewish festival.

**[v.22]** Hannah breaks with their usual practice and, instead, stays at Ramah with her infant son. Nevertheless, she makes clear to Elkanah that as soon as Samuel is weaned, she will take him to Shiloh and dedicate him there to the service of the Lord. Her intentions—“that he may appear in the presence of the Lord” (cf. 2:18)—indicate formal presentation to the Lord and commencement of a life of special service at the sanctuary. The term “forever” (meaning “perpetually” rather than “eternally”) shows that Hannah accepts that her son will remain there for the rest of his life.

**[v.23]** Elkanah reads the situation more perceptively than before and accepts his wife’s proposal, expressing his desire that Hannah would in due course fulfill what she has engaged to do. Because no divine word is mentioned in the context, the statement “may the Lord establish his word” (cf. 3:12) is rendered “may the Lord establish that which comes from your mouth” (AT) in the Septuagint. However, it is not improper to identify a reference here to the divine blessing conveyed through Eli in 1:17. It would seem that both Hannah and Elkanah expect the child born in this special way to play an extraordinary role in the outworking of God’s purpose.

In the ancient world, children were nursed for much longer than in current western practice, and “until she weaned him” may cover at least three years, a period mentioned in 2 Maccabees 7:27. So Samuel is perhaps over three years old before he is taken to Shiloh.

**[v.25]** Hannah displays no reservations about taking Samuel to Shiloh, and they go well equipped for sacrifice. Most modern versions amend the text to read “a three-year-old bull” rather than the plural expression “three bulls” (cf. ESV mg.). However, the Hebrew text is not problematic and describes an extravagant gesture that would have reflected well on Hannah’s gratitude and the resources at Elkanah’s disposal. It has been suggested that one bull was for a burnt offering, one for the purification offering expected after childbirth (Leviticus 12), and one for the peace offering made in fulfillment of Hannah’s vow.<sup>4</sup> An ephah of flour was approximately three times the quantity of flour offered with a single bull (Num. 15:9), and that, too, accords with three animals being offered. Moreover, a skin of wine held up to 6 gallons (22 liters) of wine.

The phrase “and the child was young” is literally “and the child a child,” repeating the term “na‘ar.” While this might point to the unexpected nature of the action, not only in bringing a young child to the sanctuary but even more so in leaving him there, there is also the possibility of a wordplay on the various senses of the term (cf. 1 Sam. 2:11 ESV mg.), so that the focus is on Samuel’s status as servant rather than on his age.

**[v.26]** “Oh, my lord!” was a polite method of beginning a conversation with a superior. “As you live” (lit., “as your soul/person lives”; cf. 2 Sam. 11:11; 14:19) is an oath formula by which Hannah solemnly attests to Eli that she is the woman he had interviewed at least three years earlier while she stood praying in the courtyard of the tabernacle (1 Sam. 1:9).

**[v.27-28]** Hannah gratefully acknowledges the Lord’s favorable response to her request. In these verses, “my petition” and “I made” (v. 27) and “I have lent” and “he is lent” (v. 28) play on words derived from the root sha‘al, “to ask” (already found in vv. 17, 20). “I have lent” is probably a formal declaration accompanying her action: “Hereby, in the utterance of these words, I do hand over.” “Lend” does not convey any thought of a future return of Samuel; it is an utter and irrevocable dedication that is in view.

“And he worshiped the Lord there” (cf. comment on 1:3). It is unclear who does so, but it is hardly likely to have been young Samuel. Eli is passive throughout this closing scene. Possibly Elkanah is intended (with “worship” forming an inclusio with v. 3). By his action in bowing to the Lord, he formally signifies his acceptance of the transaction and places his seal upon it, while his wife’s response is expressed in the following prayer. Another possibility is that the Hebrew verb form is in fact a plural, with “they [the family] worshiped” as the intended sense.

*Commentary used from the ESV Expositors Commentary - 1 Samuel 1:1-28*

## WHERE’S THE GOSPEL

Of Hannah, the prophet Samuel will be born (v. 20), and this Samuel will be used of God to bring to the throne a king, a man of God’s own choosing (13:14). Dramatically demonstrated in the life of Hannah is the fact that everyday faithfulness by ordinary people can, by God’s grace, change history forever. Just such faithfulness surrounds the eventual coming of the great King, Jesus. In response to prayer (Luke 1:13), childless Elizabeth is promised and receives a child, John, who like Samuel before him, heralds the coming of God’s King. The birth of that King, Jesus, involves the humble obedience of yet another faithful woman, Mary (Luke 1:38).

*Commentary used from the ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible - 1 Samuel 1:1-20*

First Samuel 1 is not primarily about Hannah, any more than it is primarily about Elkanah. It is mainly about God. First Samuel begins by showing us that God cared for Hannah. We will see, as this story unfolds, that His care for Hannah was His care for Israel. What He did for Hannah would turn out to be for Israel. Samuel (and indeed the strangely hinted-at Saul) would turn out to be, in their own ways, part of God’s answer to Israel’s leadership troubles.

First Samuel 1 points us to a most unexpected starting point for the answer that God is going to provide for the leadership crisis. Who would have looked twice at miserable, sobbing Hannah for the answer to Israel's crisis? We expect to find answers from the powerful. Hannah was not powerful. Her family were "nobodies." The point of her story, however, is that God cares.

Does God care? Yes, He cared about the leadership of His people Israel and gave Hannah a son. Yes, He cares about the leadership of the world and of us. Hannah's son will be surpassed by Mary's son. God's care for us all finds its fullest expression in Jesus Christ. If you belong to Him, you can learn to "cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

*Commentary used from Preach the Word - Does God Care? 1 Samuel 1:3-28*