

“A Real Mom”

1 Samuel 1-2

A real woman, with real pain.

There was a man named Elkanah who lived in Ramah in the region of Zuph in the hill country of Ephraim. He was the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, of Ephraim. Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah did not.

Each year Elkanah would travel to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice to the Lord of Heaven's Armies at the Tabernacle. The priests of the Lord at that time were the two sons of Eli - Hophni and Phinehas. On the days Elkanah presented his sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to Peninnah and each of her children. And though he loved Hannah, he would give her only one choice portion because the Lord had given her no children. So Peninnah would taunt Hannah and make fun of her because the Lord had kept her from having children. Year after year it was the same - Peninnah would taunt Hannah as they went to the Tabernacle. Each time, Hannah would be reduced to tears and would not even eat.

“Why are you crying, Hannah?” Elkanah would ask. “Why aren't you eating? Why be downhearted just because you have no children? You have me - isn't that better than having ten sons?”

1 Samuel 1:1-8 (NLT)

*Enjoy prosperity while you can,
but when hard times strike, realize that both come from God.
Remember that nothing is certain in this life.*

Ecclesiastes 7:14 (NLT)

God understands your pain.

A very real prayer.

Once after a sacrificial meal at Shiloh, Hannah got up and went to pray. Eli the priest was sitting at his customary place beside the entrance of the Tabernacle. Hannah was in deep anguish, crying bitterly as she prayed to the Lord. And she made this vow:

“O Lord of Heaven's Armies, if you will look upon my sorrow and

answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to you. He will be yours for his entire lifetime, and as a sign that he has been dedicated to the Lord, his hair will never be cut.”

As she was praying to the Lord, Eli watched her. Seeing her lips moving but hearing no sound, he thought she had been drinking. “Must you come here drunk?” he demanded. “Throw away your wine!”

“Oh no, sir!” she replied. “I haven't been drinking wine or anything stronger. But I am very discouraged, and I was pouring out my heart to the Lord. Don't think I am a wicked woman! For I have been praying out of great anguish and sorrow.”

“In that case,” Eli said, “go in peace! May the God of Israel grant the request you have asked of him.”

“Oh, thank you, sir!” she exclaimed. Then she went back and began to eat again, and she was no longer sad.

1 Samuel 1:9-18 (NLT)

Pray specifically.

A real answer.

The entire family got up early the next morning and went to worship the Lord once more. Then they returned home to Ramah. When Elkanah slept with Hannah, the Lord remembered her plea, and in due time she gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, “I asked the Lord for him.”

1 Samuel 1:19-20 (NLT)

Moms keep praying, keep praying, keep praying.

“And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

Luke 11:9-10 (NLT)

A real sacrifice.

The next year Elkanah and his family went on their annual trip to offer a sacrifice to the Lord and to keep his vow. But Hannah did not go. She told her husband, “Wait until the boy is weaned.

Then I will take him to the Tabernacle and leave him there with the Lord permanently.”

“Whatever you think is best,” Elkanah agreed. “Stay here for now, and may the Lord help you keep your promise.” So she stayed home and nursed the boy until he was weaned.

When the child was weaned, Hannah took him to the Tabernacle in Shiloh. They brought along a three-year-old bull for the sacrifice and a basket of flour and some wine. After sacrificing the bull, they brought the boy to Eli. “Sir, do you remember me?” Hannah asked. “I am the very woman who stood here several years ago praying to the Lord. I asked the Lord to give me this boy, and he has granted my request. Now I am giving him to the Lord, and he will belong to the Lord his whole life.” And they worshiped the Lord there.

1 Samuel 1:21-28 (NLT)

Children belong to the Lord.

But Samuel, though he was only a boy, served the Lord. He wore a linen garment like that of a priest. Each year his mother made a small coat for him and brought it to him when she came with her husband for the sacrifice.

1 Samuel 2:18-19 (NLT)

SO WHAT?

Real Worship.

Then Hannah prayed:

“My heart rejoices in the Lord!

The Lord has made me strong.

Now I have an answer for my enemies;

I rejoice because you rescued me.

No one is holy like the Lord!

There is no one besides you;

there is no Rock like our God.

1 Samuel 2:1-2 (NLT)

Growth Group Questions

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

1. What phrases do you remember your mother using with you over and over as a child?

2. What real pain or heartache did you see your mother go through?

How did she handle the pain?

3. Re-read 1 Samuel 1:6-8. Who in your life have you watched go through fertility issues? How did it affect them?

How can we come alongside the people we love as they go through this?

4. Re-read 1 Samuel 1:9-11. Have you ever cried out to God in your pain and promised Him something if he would answer? What did you promise?

Did God deliver? Did you deliver? Are you still crying out?

5. Who (or what) do you need to keep praying for?

6. What Child or grandchild, or other child you love can your group pray for together?

7. What other tangible action can you take to bless a child and let them know you and God loves them?