

The **Call** of God  
The **Response**  
of the Faithful

November 9, 2008  
1 Samuel 1  
The Call to Return Thanks

**Reflection Questions:**

(from Serendipity)

What “unchangeable” situation have you grieved over as Hannah does? Was it really unchangeable?

When has God led you into a time of disappointment before granting your heart’s desire? Are you in the midst of a time of disappointment now? What encouragement can you find in this passage? In your own experiences of God’s faithfulness?

When has the Lord “remembered” you in a time of great need?

How are you “set apart”?

What was the most encouraging thing Hannah had going for her? What was the worst thing Hannah had to cope with? Why did Hannah want a baby so badly? How could Eli have helped Hannah more? Why did God wait so long to give Hannah a son? How did Hannah feel as she brought Samuel to the temple?

When you yearn for something and it doesn’t happen, what do you do? How do you respond when God seems to be saying “no” to your prayers?

One time I felt like Hannah was when I was \_\_\_\_\_.

The most reassuring point of this passage for me is \_\_\_\_\_.

What in your life gives you a sense of self-worth?

When I’m ready I’d like to dedicate to God my \_\_\_\_\_.

**Share your story**

Share a scene of triumph from your life – a time when you got your heart’s desire. How did you respond?

**Engaging with the Scripture**

*In this passage when Eli takes the time to hear Hannah’s story something changes for both of them. Hannah, who is marginalized, is heard and blessed. Eli, who initially makes a wrong assumption about Hannah, comes to a place of being able to bless her. God has the opportunity to transform us when we engage with one another in his story.*

We are going to read a portion of this story 4 times. (One group member can read all 4 or you can have 4 different readers.) Each time you’ll be given instructions before the reading about how to listen. After the reading you’ll be given some time of silence to write. At the end of the 4 readings we’ll discuss what we heard.

Begin with prayer. Ask God to help everyone engage with this story and clearly hear his word.

**First Time**

Instructions: Listen for a word or phrase that catches your attention and write it down.

Read 1 Samuel 1:9-20

Give a minute of silence.

**Second Time**

Instructions: Put yourself in the place of Eli. Imagine what he is seeing, feeling, thinking, experiencing.

Read 1 Samuel 1:9-20

Give a few minutes of silence for everyone to write.

**Third Time**

Instructions: Put yourself in the place of Hannah. Imagine what she is seeing, feeling, thinking, experiencing.

Read 1 Samuel 1:9-20

Give a few minutes of silence for everyone to write.

**Fourth Time**

Instructions: Listen again for the word or phrase they heard in the first reading and for what God might be saying specifically to you through this scripture.

Read 1 Samuel 1:9-20

Give a few minutes of silence for everyone to pray and write.

**Discussion**

Have each person share the word or phrase they heard in the first reading.

Have each person share what they wrote down as they put themselves in the place of Eli and Hannah.

Have each person share what they heard from God in the fourth reading.

**For more discussion (if needed):**

Have you ever made an assumption about someone that you found out was wrong after you heard more of their story? Did it involve someone on the margin? What keeps you from taking the time or the risk to hear people’s stories?

If you’ve been blessed with children, how have you consciously returned them to God? If you have been blessed with opportunities, gifts, material wealth, how have you consciously given these things back to God?

**Pray** for the marginalized. **Pray** prayers of hope for those who are feeling abandoned by God. **Pray** prayers of thanksgiving for your blessings.