

# Prayer and Study Guide

Daily Scripture Readings – 5/12/19

**Monday** – Read I Samuel 1:1-8. **Barrenness and Infertility.** *Hannah* means *charming, attractive, favor, or grace* which suggests her role as the wife Elkanah loves. *Peninnah* means *fertile or prolific* which suggests her role as a childbearer. This created tension and pain in this family. Hannah struggled with barrenness and infertility. Elkanah is a kind and well intentioned husband. He loves Hannah and tries to treat her with care, but he is also a bit self-centered. He does not tell Hannah that she is worth more to him than ten sons. Both Elkanah and Peninnah view Hannah's infertility as a sign that God has rejected her, but God's response to Hannah will prove this to be a premature judgment. If you struggle with infertility, there is great comfort in knowing that so many holy people wrestled with infertility: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, and Zechariah and Elizabeth. God loved them deeply and eventually answered their prayers and blessed them with children. Pray for couples who are struggling with infertility.

**Tuesday** – Read I Samuel 1:9-18 and Luke 11:9-13. **Hannah's Persistent Prayer.**

Hannah presented her struggle against infertility to the Lord. She poured herself out to the Lord and asked God to see her misery and remember her. She asked God to give her a son, and she had faith that God would hear her prayer. She promised to dedicate this son to religious service. Hannah admits to Eli that she is a *deeply troubled* woman which might be better translated as *hard, obstinate or stubborn of spirit*. Hannah persists in asking God for a child. In our struggles against barrenness and infertility, we persistently pray that God will work through doctors and medical treatments, and we pray that God's healing touch will be on our lives. We trust that somehow, God will use whatever happens in our lives for God's purposes. Ask God to remember you and act in your life to answer your prayers and bless you.

**Wednesday** – Read I Samuel 1:11, 17-20 and Exodus 2:23-25. **God Remembered Hannah.** When Eli saw that Hannah was pouring herself out in prayer to God, he said, *"Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him."* Having rested her future in God's hands, Hannah is no longer sad. She trusted God to respond favorably to her request. God remembered Hannah and blessed her with a son. Hannah named her son, *Samuel* which means *God heard*. Hannah remembered her prayer and said, *"I have asked him of the Lord."* When you ask God to bless you, do you trust that God will respond to your prayer? As you pray, spend some time thinking about the requests you have made to God and how God responded to each request, and then offer thanks to God.

**Thursday** – Read I Samuel 1:21-28 - **For This Child I Prayed.** When Elkanah said, *"Do what seems best to you, wait until you have weaned him; only – may the Lord establish his word,"* he alludes to the purpose of Samuel's life. He will become a prophet, a mediator of God's Word to all of Israel. When Hannah returned to the Temple to dedicate her son to serve the Lord she told the prophet, Eli, <sup>27</sup>*"For this child I prayed; and the LORD has granted me the petition that I made to him. <sup>28</sup>Therefore I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives, he is given to the LORD."* Each child is a precious gift from God, and God calls each child to love and serve the Lord. God calls parents to bless children and help them grow as children of God. Ask God to help parents to raise their children to serve God's purposes in the world.

**Friday** – Read I Samuel 2:1-10 and Luke 1:46-55. **Hannah's Song of Gratitude.** When God answered her prayers, Hannah sang a song of gratitude. She gave God the glory for blessing her. Mary's *Magnificat* is very similar to Hannah's song of gratitude. Both Hannah and Mary praise God for lifting up the lowly and making the impossible possible. Both Hannah and Mary have experienced the presence of the Living God in their lives. How is God faithful to those who reach out to God? How has God answered your prayers? How has God blessed you? Have you returned your gratitude and praise to God? As you pray, express your thanks and gratitude to God for what God has done for you.

**Saturday** – Read Luke 11:5-8; 18:1-8. **Persevere in Prayer.** Jesus wanted his followers to learn that they should always pray and not give up. *The Parable of the Widow and the Judge* is a twin of *The Parable of the Neighbor in Need*. Both illustrate the importance of persistence in prayer. Both feature a person in need persistently pressing a request. If a neighbor or an unjust judge will respond to an urgent or repeated request, then our gracious God will also respond to those who call out in need. Through these parables, Jesus encourages us to persevere in prayer. Persevering in prayer gives us hope and reminds us that God is bigger than all of our problems. As you pray, spend some time praising God for God's goodness and all of the times God has helped you in the past. Then, make your requests to God.

**Lectionary Readings:** Acts 9:36-43; Psalm 23; Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:22-30.

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