

## Going Deeper with Elizabeth



*Icon from The Association of Catholic Bloggers*

Elizabeth's story can be seen in Luke 1. 5-25 and 39 -80. The Bible never again refers to her. Elizabeth is known mostly as the wife of Zechariah and the mother of John the Baptist and also because she is the person chosen by Mary, the mother of Jesus, as a companion in the early weeks of Mary's pregnancy. This means Elizabeth is noted mainly because of other people. Yet, there is much we can learn from her experiences.

Elizabeth and Zechariah both belong to the priestly tribe of Aaron. Luke gives both of them substantial praise for their faithfulness to God. Zechariah has been given his once in a lifetime opportunity to serve in the temple. During his week of service he has a vision in which the Angel Gabriel informs him that he will have a son. He questions this news, as he and Elizabeth are so old, and as a result of this he is struck dumb. So the husband Elizabeth greets at the end of the week is unable to speak. During her the first five months of her pregnancy Elizabeth remains in seclusion so she too is silent. The silence is broken by a visit from Mary, who is much younger but also pregnant. Within this silent world the two women are able to express their thanksgiving and praise to God. We imagine also their astonishment, hopes and fears. What results is an amazing song of thanksgiving and liberation from Mary, in the Magnificat.

Elizabeth is called by God to give birth and nurture in the faith John, who is to prepare the way for the ministry of Jesus. An incredible calling in, we might say, one so old! The silence is also interesting. Certainly, at a time when the husband so often dominated the wife, it gave a safe space for Mary and Elizabeth. It is worth noting that Mary too questioned Gabriel's message but she was not silenced.

### *Ponderings:*

*Do you expect God's calling to be to people of all ages, including the very young and old?*

*Do you experience silence as a gift or an irritation?*

*Is it helpful for you to have the company of one other or do you prefer to be alone?*

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