

Going deeper with Hannah



Hannah is an interesting character in the Bible. Her story can be found in the opening chapters of 1 Samuel in the Old Testament. In Hannah's culture, unlike ours, men were permitted many wives. Hannah's husband had two. He seems to have been a kindly soul; we are told that he loved her, even though it appeared she couldn't have children. The book may have been written over 2,500 years ago, but the story still has relevance today.

The story has themes of infertility, bullying, and prayer and it takes us from pain to joy as Hannah finds peace. The words, "So when are you going to have a baby?" are often spoken to a recently married couple. Do we consider the effect they might have? They may cause distress. The couple may have decided they don't want children, they may have lost a much hoped for child and not told anyone, they may not feel ready or there may be complications.

For women like Hannah those words can be like a blow. Adding to her misery the other wife was able to have children and taunted Hannah with her infertility. Here Hannah is a role model. She doesn't retaliate but takes her pain to God. In fact, she prays so hard the priest Eli thinks she is drunk.

Hannah's prayers are answered and she gives birth to a son, Samuel who she dedicates to the service of God. Hannah's prayer as she leaves her son with the priest Eli at the temple to begin his life of service, is in Chapter 2 of 1 Samuel and begins:-

My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in my God

My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in my victory

There is no Holy One like the Lord, no one beside you; there is no Rock like our God.

This is the voice of a woman who has triumphed over adversity. As painful as it must have been for her to leave her first born Hannah trusts in God and she goes on to have five more children. Her prayers were answered and she found peace.

Ponderings:

Why do you think Hannah prayed so hard? Was it because there wasn't anything else she could do?

Can you think of a time when your relationship with God has been strengthened following a period of adversity?

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