

## October 16

**Scriptures:** Read 1 Samuel 1

**Key Verse:** “For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition.... Therefore ... as long as he lives he shall be lent to the Lord.” (1 Samuel 1:27-28)

### Overview

Here we see a beautiful example of a godly family that would go with offerings to worship the Lord at the tabernacle each year in accordance with the Law of Moses (1:3). Though they were living in the territory of the Ephraimites, they were Levites of the Kohathite family (1 Chronicles 6:27-33). Samuel, then, was not a priest by birth, since he was not of Aaron’s family; yet God chose him to be priest after Eli’s death, for none in the family of Eli were worthy.

Our hearts go out to poor Hannah who not only had great sorrow because of her barrenness, but was also terribly grieved by the continuous taunting of Elkanah’s other wife. In that culture it was very, very important for every woman to be married and bear children. If she could not, it meant great shame and disgrace. Polygamous marriage was a common practice in those days; however, as we see from the situation of Hannah, it was less than ideal. The original plan of God was for there to be one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24). Elkanah’s second marriage to Peninnah probably took place because Hannah was childless and it was very important for every man to have an heir.

Hannah prayed fervently, pouring her heart out to God and asking that He open her womb. She made a twofold vow, pledging her son for lifelong service to God and that he would also be a lifelong Nazarite (like Samson and John the Baptist). This signified a total dedication to God, for normally the Levite was only required in God’s service until age fifty, and a Nazarite vow was usually only temporary (Numbers 6:1-5).

Hannah’s method of intense and silent prayer must have been unusual at that time, for Eli thought she was drunk. However, she soon convinced him of her sincerity. God honoured Hannah’s faith and heartfelt prayers, and she, whose name means “grace”, was looked upon by God with His divine grace. We can have confidence like Hannah and the psalmist who said, “Certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer” (Psalm 66:19). When Hannah left the tabernacle, she was full of faith and thanksgiving, for she knew beyond any doubt that God had heard her prayer, as is signified by the name Samuel, meaning “asked of God”. His birth was not an accident. God had a plan for this boy’s life; it was a life specially dedicated to God by his mother. And Hannah kept her vow unto the Lord, for once Samuel had been weaned, which was usually at about three years old in those days, Hannah travelled with him to Shiloh (the central place of worship where Joshua erected the tabernacle, Joshua 18:1). There she offered three bulls (one in fulfillment of her vow, one as a burnt offering, and one as a thank offering) and gave Samuel over to God.

Parents can have a great effect upon the spiritual life of their children. They can dedicate them to God and, very importantly, pray for them. All children are truly gifts from God. He has entrusted them to the parents (Ps. 127:3). What a wonderful responsibility! We do not know what God has in store for our children. Samuel became one of the greatest prophets of Israel. The greatest thing we can do for our children is raise them in the fear of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6), teach them the Word of God, and lead them to Christ (2 Timothy 3:15).

### **Prayer**

Father God, give us the grace to pray like Hannah, speak the word of faith like Eli, co-operate with Your plan like Elkanah, and give our all to You.