

God Answers Hannah's Prayer



Scripture Reference: [1 Samuel 1:1-20](#)

Suggested Theme: God hears all of our prayers.
We can pray and know God listens.

Memory Verse: “Never stop praying.” [1 Thessalonians 5:17, ICB](#)

Story Overview:

Elkanah had two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. Peninnah taunted Hannah because Hannah had no children. Hannah prayed and wept near the entrance when she accompanied Elkanah to the Tabernacle. In her prayer, she promised the Lord that if He gave her a son, she would give that son to Him all the days of her life. Hannah's prayer was so intense that the High Priest, Eli, saw her and thought she was drunk. Hannah's prayer was answered, and she gave birth to a son. His name was Samuel.

Background Study:

[Click here for The Book of Judges: The Big Picture.](#)

Samuel came on the scene at the end of this time period. He was the last judge.

Samuel's story begins in the hilly country of Ephraim at a place called Ranathaim near Shiloh. Elkanah had two wives, a common practice in early Bible times. In those days, polygamy was tolerated under the Law of Moses ([Deuteronomy 21:15-17](#)). However, it was not God's original intention, for as Jesus taught, it could cause great misery ([Matthew 19:3-8](#)).

Things were miserable for Elkanah's two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Only Peninnah had children." Peninnah provoked Hannah because of her childlessness. Perhaps Peninnah was jealous of the special attention that Elkanah lavished on Hannah.

This caused much trouble and rivalry between the two women. Because children are a blessing from God, the absence of children was sometimes considered a punishment for sin. Peninnah may have suggested this possibility and used it to hurt Hannah because she was jealous of Hannah.

Three times a year, every Israelite male was required to appear before the Lord at the central sanctuary ([Deuteronomy 16:16-17](#)). They were supposed to offer sacrifices to the Lord. Once each year, it seems as if the whole family attended. At those times, Elkanah always gave a portion of meat to Peninnah and her children to offer as a sacrifice. Because of his love for Hannah, Elkanah gave her a double portion.

While attending a feast in Shiloh, the nation's religious centre at that time, Hannah left the feasting to pray at the Tabernacle. Her prayers were honest, and she told God of her anguish over her childlessness. Her heart's desire was stated simply, but her distress was evident.

Hannah vowed that if the Lord would give her a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord's service ([1 Samuel 1:11](#)). Then she prayed, "May your servant find favour in your eyes" ([1 Samuel 1:18](#)). Hannah was so intense in prayer and so focused on the Lord, that she was oblivious to those around her.

The priest, Eli, observed Hannah moving her lips without sound and jumped to the incorrect conclusion that she was drunk. He immediately reprimanded her for being drunk at the Tabernacle. Hannah explained that she was not drunk but praying this way because of her sorrow. Hannah received his blessing when she told him of the longing in her heart.

Hannah conceived after she and her husband returned home, and a son was born. Hannah named her son Samuel, which means "asked of God" ([1 Samuel 1:20](#)).

For more about Samuel, see [Samuel Becomes a Helper in the Tabernacle](#), and [The Lord Speaks to Samuel](#).

Way to Introduce the Story:

Discuss any aspect of prayer. The times you have prayed, specific requests you or someone you know have made. If you have a church bulletin, see if there are any prayer requests. Discuss prayer posture (you can pray lying down, standing up, kneeling, etc. Ask the children what they pray for. "In today's story, we are going to learn about a woman that prayed for something she wanted very much!"

The Story:

Each year, Elkanah and his family travelled to Shiloh to offer sacrifices to the Lord. Elkanah always offered sacrifices and then gave his family meat to offer as sacrifices, too. Elkanah had two wives. He would always give his first wife, Peninnah, enough portions of the sacrifice meat for her and her children. Then Elkanah would give twice as much sacrifice meat to his other wife, Hannah. That was because he loved Hannah very much, and he knew she was sad because she had no children.

Hannah was sad. She had wanted to have a baby for a long time. Peninnah sometimes teased her and made her feel even sadder. Once, when she was in Shiloh with Elkanah, Hannah wanted to be alone to pray to the Lord. She went to the entrance of the tabernacle tent. She didn't see anyone around, so she began to pray. She just talked to God and told Him how she was feeling. Hannah told Him all about how sad she was. She told him how bad she felt when Peninnah picked on her. Then she told the Lord how much she wanted a baby.

"Lord, if you will give me a son then I will promise to give him back to you so he can be a helper to you."

Hannah was praying so hard that she was crying. Her lips were moving, but no one could hear her because she was not praying out loud.

Hannah thought she was all alone, but she was not. The High Priest, Eli, was sitting beside one of the poles of the Tabernacle tent. Eli did not know she was praying when he saw her crying and moving her lips. He thought she was drunk!

"How long will you keep getting drunk? You need to stop drinking wine!" Eli said to Hannah.

"Oh, no. I am not drunk! I was just praying to the Lord. Maybe I looked drunk because I am so upset," replied Hannah.

Eli saw what she said was true. "I am sorry, I did not know you were praying," Eli apologized. "I am the High Priest. I know that the Lord will listen to your prayers. I will pray too. May the Lord give you whatever you are asking for."

After this, Hannah felt better. She and Elkanah travelled back home. Later that year, Hannah had a beautiful little baby boy. Hannah knew that the Lord had heard her prayer. Hannah and Elkanah named their little baby Samuel, which means "asked of the Lord." Hannah also remembered the promise she had

made to the Lord. She knew that when Samuel was old enough, she would have to make sure he became a helper to the Lord.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible, but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

[Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.](#)

View this slideshow and download it from the original source:

<http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/samuel-born/>

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. [Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.](#)

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Review:

- What were the names of Elkanah's two wives? (Peninnah and Hannah)
- Why was Hannah sad? (Hannah had no children, but Peninnah did. Peninnah teased Hannah)
- When Hannah was crying and praying quietly, what did Eli think? (He thought she was drunk)
- What did Hannah promise the Lord? (If she had a son, she would give him back to the Lord as a helper)
- How did Hannah know God had heard her prayer? (After she prayed at the temple, Hannah had a baby boy that year)
- What did Hannah learn about God from this experience? (suggestions: God hears her prayers, God loves her, etc.)
- What did you learn about God from this story?

Reflection:

- What is something you wonder about in this story?
- What do you think Hannah looked or sounded like when she was crying and praying at the temple?
- How do you think Hannah felt while she was praying?
- How do you think Hannah felt when she learned she was pregnant, and later had her baby boy Samuel?
- Have you every prayed and cried at the same time because you were so sad or upset?
- Why do you think God hears and answers our prayers?

- God always hears our prayers, but sometimes He doesn't give us what we want or ask for. Why do you think this is? Does God still love us if this happens?
- Do you have a story of God answering the prayer of someone in your family, or answering one of your prayers? Tell us about it if you would like to.

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. [A variety of prayer methods are found here.](#)

Song Suggestions:

- [God is Listening When We Pray \(Song\) English/Cebuano](#)
- [Books of the Old Testament Song](#)
- [Read Your Bible-Pray Every Day](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- [How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.](#)
- [Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.](#)

Activities:

- See the article on [Prayer](#) for ideas.
- Write the word "Prayer" on the chalkboard/whiteboard. Then write "who? what? when? where? why?" As you call out a word (who? what? when? ...), gently throw a bean bag (or any soft object) to a child. When the child catches the bag, they must give an example of the word you called out. For example, say "where?" and throw the bag. The child catches it and answers: "at home." That child says, "When?" and throws the bag. The next child catches it, and the game continues. Encourage the children to throw to children who haven't had a turn.
- Have a chain prayer.
- Use a puppet to tell the story from Hannah's point of view.
- You could make a head covering out of cloth and tell the story as if you were Hannah, or you could do the same thing as any of the characters in the story.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable "God's Story" printable reflection page. [Free printables for this story.](#)

Crafts:

- Make a miniature-size model of the story. If you teach over a number of weeks, you could add to the model to form a collection that reviews the stories. You can place the models in boxes. One box could display one judge. Samuel Box- (Covering 3 Samuel lessons) Picture of mum and baby, baby items, sewing items, little coat, tabernacle pictures or model, picture of sleeping boy, pillow and blanket . . .

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. [Free printables for this story.](#)

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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page with text \(Ministry Spark\)](#)
- [Craft: Prayer reminder pocket made from a paper plate \(Create kids crafts\)](#)
- [Craft: Praying hand silhouettes \(DLTK\)](#)
- [Craft: Prayer pail with popsicle/craft sticks \(Lu bird baby\)](#)
- [Worksheet: Crossword puzzle \(Sermons 4 kids\)](#)
- [Other: Activity: "Five finger prayer" to teach children to pray \(Ministry to children\)](#)
- [Other: Lesson on prayer for children \(Ministry to children\)](#)
- [Other: Explaining how to teach children to pray \(Ministry to children\)](#)
- [Other: Five-finger prayer activity \(Sermon 4 kids\)](#)
- [Other: Recipe for praying pretzels \(DLTK\)](#)

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