

Group Resource

Sermon Notes – Sunday, May 5, 2013

Message: "Asked and answered"
Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:10-18, 26-28

- 1) In 1 Samuel 1, we are introduced to Elkanah, whose choice to have two wives created a divided home. Pagan customs permitted a husband to obtain a second wife so that he could produce an heir, but the cultural acceptance of the custom did not mean that God accepted the practice.
- 2) Elkanah took a noble goal of bearing children and distorted it by taking his own route to accomplish it.
 - a) Elkanah's answer to Hannah's barrenness was to get another wife. The problem was that God was the source of the closed womb and not Elkanah's choice of a wife. We must be careful when we decide to solve a God-sized problem with human-sized wisdom.
 - b) This chapter is a story of Hannah's faith in God. She overcame her obstacles and ultimately, endured to see the will of God manifested in her life.
- 3) Each of us will experience our share of burdens in this life. The key question is not whether one burden is fairer than another, but how will we handle the burdens that God allows on our plates. We have to keep progressing towards God's best no matter where we start the journey from.
- 4) The only way to get God's best is to ASK for God's will to be done in our lives. However, there is a right and a wrong way to ask God.
 - a) First, we must understand that God delights in answering our prayers, ^{MATT 7:7} "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."
 - b) But, if our motivations are incorrect, what we have asked for can distract or destroy us.
 - i) ^{JAMES 4:3} When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.
 - ii) ^{JOHN 15:7} If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.
- 5) What can we learn from Hannah about the right way to ask God for his will to be done in our lives?
- 6) Prayer petitions God.
 - a) Never get distracted by the one who is provoking you, stay focused on the one who can deliver you. We have to ask ourselves whether we believe that God can deliver us? If we believe that God can, our faith should transform our actions like it did for Hannah.
 - b) Hannah turned her rival's provoking into prayer. There will always be something provoking us. We have to decide how we will respond: in faith, or in emotions.
- 7) Hannah was persistent and passionate in ASKING GOD
 - a) Hannah continued to pray year-after-year until God either answered her request or changed something within her.
 - b) Hannah also realized that persistence in prayer required persistence in worship. She couldn't sustain her faith without continually worshipping God.

- 8) Finally, prayer must be accompanied by Thanksgiving and accountability. Answered prayer always comes with additional responsibility.
- a) **Remember the provider.** We must remember that it is God who blessed us and not from our own strength.
 - b) **Relinquish every blessing into God's hands.** With every blessing, we have to remember that we are stewards of God's blessings. This means that we are expected to utilize God's blessings in accordance with His will.
 - c) **Rightly prioritize the blessing.** If answered prayer removes us from our relationship with God, then the blessing has become an idol. We have to be faithful to the responsibilities of answered prayer but careful to not let the blessing overtake us.

Group Resource

Let's Talk Notes – Week of May 5, 2013

Message: "Asked and answered"
Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:10-18, 26-28

- 1) Share briefly about your family. How many brothers and sisters do you have? Do you have any interesting family characteristics?
- 2) As you reflect back on last weekend's sermon, what one principle or insight stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful or difficult to grasp? Were you challenged in any area of your personal walk with God?
- 3) Pastor Joseph shared that:
Each of us will experience our share of burdens in this life. The key question is not whether one burden is fairer than another, but how will we handle the burdens that God allows on our plates.

Have you ever felt that God had burdened you unfairly? How do you think Hannah felt when she was barren and her rival was fertile and bearing children? Do you think God's opinion of Hannah changed through prayer or did Hannah change in the process? How do you reconcile the fact that God continually loved Hannah but allowed her to experience a season of barrenness?

- 4) What should you do when you feel that life is unfair? How does asking for God's will to be done affect your situation?
- 5) It is sometimes hard to think that God would ask us to relinquish to Him the very blessings that He gives to us. How did Hannah have to give back to God what God had blessed her with?
- 6) How do you prioritize God's blessings in your life? What are examples of how we can mis-prioritize God's blessings and turn them into idols? How does remembering God as your provider keep your priorities in order?
- 7) In 1 Samuel 1:26-27, Hannah testified before Eli
"As surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. 27 I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him."

Is there anything that you can testify before your real.life group that God has done while you have been a part of your group?