

## Spiritual Formations Questions for Small Groups and Families

“Hannah Prays for Davd” (1 Samuel 1:1-2:10)

***When you’re down to nothing...God’s up to something!***

1. Put yourself in Hannah’s shoes. What is she feeling as she worships in Shiloh with her husband, and her husband’s *other* wife, and their children?
2. Why do you think David’s story begins with Hannah? How is Hannah’s life like a parable of Israel at that time?
3. Talk about a time when pain and tears led you to pray. How did God meet you during that desperate time?
4. What would be different if Hannah hadn’t prayed? As you discuss this question, consider together the power of ordinary people, praying ordinary prayers.
5. What was your reaction to Hannah’s vow, and then her action in “giving Samuel” to the priesthood when he was only three years old? Does this make her a devout woman, or a bad mother? Did she need to do this? Would God have answered her prayer if she hadn’t included the vow? The Bible doesn’t tell us. What do you think?
6. What stands out to you from Hannah’s song? What strikes you? If you have time, flip over to Luke 1:46-55 and read Mary’s song. What do they have in common? What do they communicate about God?
7. When Hannah’s Song left verse 1 (and her own private gratitude) and continued on to verses 2-10, it got larger. So large that, like a black hole, the whole nation of Israel got sucked in to its vortex of praise. To what extent does Hannah’s song become your song? In what ways does Hannah speak for you, personally?
8. **PRAYER.** How do Hannah’s prayers challenge and provoke you to a deeper prayer life? In what ways does her example challenge you to develop this aspect of your relationship with God? In particular—when you pray, do you expect to *give* as well as get?
9. **THE POOR.** Pastor Bill cited that Hannah’s Song is just one of many biblical examples that illustrate that God’s heart belongs to the poor. Does your heart belong to the poor? In what ways have you entered into solidarity with the poor, or given sacrificially in order to meet their needs and replenish their joy? How might the Christmas Holiday prompt you to refocus your commitment to the least of these?
10. **HOPE.** What threatens to rob your hope and your joy? What sorts of things cause you to throw your hands up and feel paralyzed and defeated? What does Hannah’s story say to you in those situations? What would it look like to join Hannah in the sanctuary, and thumb your nose at your circumstances, and insist that “God hasn’t run out of gifts, that circumstances aren’t set in concrete, that life isn’t fated after all?”

**Spend some time in prayer for one another.**