

ICEBREAKER

Let's assume there is a line of fifty people ahead of you and the wait for (fill in the blank) could be several hours. What are you willing to wait in line for?

SCRIPTURE READING

We are in the third week of our RESPONSE series. The three main players up to this point is Elkanah, an obscure man from an obscure place. He has a wife he loves very much named Hannah. However, much to her anguish, Hannah is unable to conceive and have children. So Elkanah took a second wife named Penninah, which was culturally acceptable back in this day. Penninah had many children while Hannah remained barren.

Read together as a group: **1 Samuel 1:3-7**. Take turns reading a verse at a time.

"Every year this man went from his hometown up to Shiloh to worship and offer a sacrifice to God-of-the-Angel-Armies. Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, served as the priests of God there. When Elkanah sacrificed, he passed helpings from the sacrificial meal around to his wife Peninnah and all her children, but he always gave an especially generous helping to Hannah because he loved her so much, and because God had not given her children. But her rival wife taunted her cruelly, rubbing it in and never letting her forget that God had not given her children. This went on year after year. Every time she went to the sanctuary of God she could expect to be taunted. Hannah was reduced to tears and had no appetite."

— 1 Samuel 1:3-7 MSG

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **When you read Hannah's story, what are some thoughts or feelings that come to mind for you personally?**
- God will use "here" to prepare you for "there". We cry out to God to bring us "there" but God has you "here". God has you waiting.
Discuss a time in your life that God had you "here" in a waiting season in order to prepare to take you "there"? What was the outcome?
- Dale Ralph Davis writes, "God's tendency is to make our total inability his starting point." This was true of Hannah's story.
When has this statement been true of your story?

- **A Nazarite Vow (not cutting one's hair) was a way for a person to publicly declare they had surrendered their whole life to God? What symbols today would make this same sort of declaration in our society?**

- Read 1 Samuel 1:9-11

Can you recall a time in your life when like Hannah, your prayer went beyond ritual and duty and like a hurt child, you cried out to God in your anguish?

- Read 1 Samuel 1:12-18

Hannah had prayed and was content to leave her situation with God. She received peace about it all.

Read Philippians 4: 6-7

Discuss a time that you, like Hannah, ceased worrying by praying about your situation, thanking the Lord, completely placing your trust in Him and you received peace beyond your own understanding of the situation.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

You'll note that this is repeating from week to week - and that is intentional. Continue to reflect on the following two questions and write in your journal what you are hearing from God.

What is Jesus saying? Where is He asking you to trust Him? Where is He encouraging you these days? Where are you feeling His love in your life? What areas in your life style and a habits is He speaking to you about changing?

What am I doing in RESPONSE?

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

We all have the need to pray and to be prayed for. This week we're going to get up close and personal. On a piece of paper have each Small Group participant write their name and place in a bowl. Then have each member draw a name (other than their own) so that each member can pray for the member they drew from the bowl throughout the week.

PRAISE REPORTS / PRAYER REQUESTS

SPECIAL NOTE: Thanksgiving Sunday is a special message from Pastor Mark that is not part of our RESPONSE Series. There will be no study materials that week (Oct 8-14). Please decide as a group if you will still be meeting for a social time or postponing until the following week when the series resumes.