

small group **discussion**

Faithfulness: the Life of Samuel

For the sermon on September 13-14, 2014

“The Meltdown”

Get Acquainted

As a kid, what did you want to grow up to be?

Get Started

What resonated with you most as you listened to this week’s sermon? What was the single most compelling or impactful thing you heard?

Listen to the Story | 1 Samuel 1

- **Option 1:** The small group leader tells the story accurately and passionately from memory. The group listens with Bibles closed.
- **Option 2:** Someone from the group reads the story while the group listens with Bibles closed.

Tell the Story | 1 Samuel 1

- **Option 1:** Everyone gets a partner and retells the story to their partner from memory.
- **Option 2:** One or two people volunteer to retell the story to the group from memory.

Read the Story | 1 Samuel 1

- Read the story with everyone following along in their copy of the text. Feel free to use another Bible version if you have read it before.

Explore the Story

What do you see? What does this mean?

1. Who are the characters and what roles are being played in the story? What did they say and do?
2. Describe the tension in the story.
3. What choices are being made? What choices *could* be made? What are the outcomes of the choices?
4. What did you find compelling in this story?
5. What questions do you have? (Something you don’t understand or need more information about.)

How does this story connect with *your* story?

Family pain (verses 1-8). The tension in this story stems from this simple reality: “Peninnah had children but Hannah had none.” Weary from Peninnah’s constant mockery, Hannah has an emotional meltdown at the tabernacle in Shiloh. Some of the greatest pain we experience is family pain. Why is family pain so deeply difficult? What current situation in your family (or extended family) is providing you an opportunity to trust God?

Prayer and lament (verses 9-18). Crisis tends to move us one way or the other; toward God or toward bitterness. Hannah was faithful. She moved **to** God in the middle of the mess. In Hannah's pain, she poured her heart out to God in a deeply expressive way. Hannah lamented. In this week's *Beyond the Weekend* (Day 2), you are encouraged to write a lament. A lament is a prayer that expresses the honest emotions we are feeling because of a difficult situation in life. Briefly look at Psalm 13 together (a lament of David). What kind of prayer of lament could move you toward God? What benefit do you see in writing a lament? How would you start your lament?

Giving back to God (verses 19-28). Hannah's plan, if God blesses her with a child, is to give that child back to God. And that's what she does. In an act of enormous sacrifice, Hannah brings young Samuel to the temple so he can have a life dedicated to God. Now, Ada Bible Church is not interested in you permanently dropping your kids off at the door; however, there are practical ways for you to give your kids back to God. What are they? Why is this so important to you as a parent and to your children?

Believing in God's mercy. Read Matthew 11:28-30 together. This is a great passage to memorize. Think of some opportunities over the last couple of months when you could have used this passage if it was stored in your memory bank. If you've memorized this passage, when have you found comfort and rest from these words?

God's movement in seasons of intense pain. 1 Samuel 1 is just the beginning of the story. Young Samuel will become a great leader during a wicked time in Israel's history. But the story begins with a woman who is intensely hurt and troubled. God is active in her pain. God has the uncanny way of making something unspeakably good out of something unspeakably terrible. Spend time in prayer asking God to show you how he is divinely active for good in the tough circumstances you may be facing. Ask him for strength, courage, hope, and divine perspective to see and trust his work through the struggle.



ada bible church

616.868.7005 | adabible.org