



Session 5 9 May	Prayer: Mystery and Purpose. Hannah Liz How
Verses from passage	1 Samuel 1. 1-28. 2. 1-11 and 18-19
Key Passages	Philippians 4. 6-7 Luke 18. 9-14 James 1.6
Main Points	<p>God is working in, around and through our circumstances/decisions etc to bring about good things for us personally but also on a wider canvas. Hannah has no idea that her desperate prayer for a son is directly connected with God's plan for Samuel to be the great prophet and priest who would anoint the first two kings of Israel and change the course of the nation's history.</p> <p>Hannah prayed in humility and simple trust that God is a powerful and good God and she received strength and peace from God even before He had answered her prayer.</p> <p>Hannah's second prayer - at the very point when she was about to fulfill her promise and leave her child - was a prayer of praise. It shows a deepened confidence in God and knowledge of who He is; it is prophetic.</p> <p>When we pray in the Spirit - with faith and humility - we are participating in God's purposes. Our 'small' matters can get woven into God's glorious, far reaching plans in ways we can only begin to imagine.</p>
Discussion questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. How do you relate to Hannah - in her desperation - making her vow about giving a son back to God? Have you ever prayed a 'be careful what you pray for' prayer? eg. we sometimes sing things like, '<i>Break my heart for what breaks yours</i>'.</li><li>2. What is our experience of receiving - or not receiving - strength from God when we pray about our problems? What was it that lifted Hannah's spirits after she had prayed?</li></ol>
This week	Spend some extra time in prayer - including lifting matters to God throughout the day in a constant God-awareness way. Ask God to show you what He wants you to pray. Develop a sense of your prayer being about things you're concerned about but also about what God is seeking to do in you and in others. Approach your prayers with a conscious sense of who God is in all his power, love and goodness.