

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

Worshipping Together is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. frankstonrp.org.au bit.ly/WTrpcaf

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. airdrierpcs.org

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. bit.ly/WkBbl or bit.ly/3yrBbl

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are drawn in part from commentaries on 1 Samuel by Gordon Keddie, John Woodhouse, and Dale Ralph Davis

Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.



If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

Read, pray, repeat.

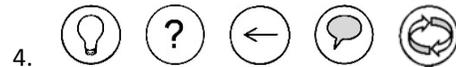
* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested a godly mother will lead her children

Reading 1 Samuel 1:1-3 A certain man...

Notes (See back page for authors)
The book of 1 Samuel is a transition between the time of Israel’s Judges and Israel’s Kings. The account begins with a certain man named Elkanah and his wife, Hannah. Elkanah was a Levite (see 1 Chron 6:1,27,34) and a fairly godly man for his day. (see Judges 17:6, 21:25) Elkanah went yearly to worship and sacrifice, as God had commanded (Deut 12:5-7, 16:16). At the same time he had married 2 wives, something that was common yet was against God’s plan (Gen 2:24). Like Elkanah, we can easily be swept up by the practices of our culture, yet having the complete Bible and resurrected Saviour, we have far less excuse. (see Keddie)

As often happens in God’s unfolding plan of redemption, a childless woman plays a significant role in the story. Hannah, probably Elkanah’s first wife, had not been able to have children. *Barren women seem to be God’s instruments in raising up key figures in the history of redemption, whether the promised seed (Isaac), the father of Israel (Jacob), saviors or preservers of Israel (Joseph, Samson, Samuel), or the forerunner of the great King (John the Baptist).* (Davis) *Only God could bring something important out of the unimportance and “barrenness” of 1 Sam 1:1, 2.* (Woodhouse)

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. In what way was Elkanah a godly man?
 2. In what way was Elkanah more conformed to his world?
 3. What other childless women play a role in God’s plan?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 62a²
1. Commit you and your family in prayer to godliness, by His help
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

¹ You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord’s Day you review the previous week’s readings and/or the previous or current week’s sermons and pray together

² Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

Reading 1 Samuel 1:24-28 Granted to the Lord

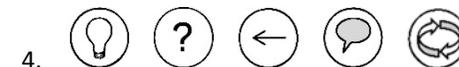
Notes (See back page for authors)
As soon as Samuel is weaned, still quite young (v.24), Hannah went to worship God at Shiloh. After her offerings and worship she brought young Samuel to Eli so that he could serve God under Eli’s care. We will see that the Lord is generous with Hannah and grants her 5 more children to raise in her own home while Samuel serves God in God’s house (2:18-21).

We should pay special attention to Hannah’s words in verses 27–28 as she presents little Samuel to Eli. Four times she uses a form of the Hebrew root (to ask), a fact which English translations obscure because it is difficult to anglicize fluently. If we tolerate a rougher rendering we could read it like this:

For this child I prayed, and Yahweh gave me my asking which I asked from him; and I also have given back what was asked to Yahweh; all the days he lives he is one that is asked for Yahweh. (Davis)

Why was the prayer of Hannah granted? Was it because she was so sincere in her praying? No. Was it because she was the most miserable of all childless women? Of course not. Was it because she made such an extraordinary vow? Certainly not. We will see, as this story unfolds, that [God’s] care for Hannah was his care for Israel. [Yet] Hannah’s son will be surpassed by Mary’s son. (Woodhouse)

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What does Hannah do as soon as Samuel is weaned? Why?
 2. How is the significance of “asking” emphasised in this story?
 3. What was God doing that was bigger than granting Hannah a son?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 62a
1. Pray with your family that you will ask and God will answer your prayers for His sake more than for yours
 2. Pray for your family
 3. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
 4. Pray for the reading and preaching of God’s word tomorrow

Reading 1 Samuel 1:19-23 Heard of God

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Elkanah takes his family home after worship the next morning. Once home, when Elkanah was intimate with Hannah, God remembered her. God had not forgotten – rather this is the language of His covenant care for His people. He remembered Noah and his family and the animals in the ark (Gen 8:1), Abraham while destroying Sodom so He saved Lot, Rachel and overcame her barrenness (Gen 30:22), Israel in their oppression in Egypt and so He delivered them (Ex 2:24) *Whenever God “remembered” his people, it led to his action on their behalf. We will not be mistaken if we expect that his remembering Hannah will involve his remembering his people Israel.* (Woodhouse)

Remembering Hannah and her affliction, God granted her request and she held her asked for son, Samuel. The precise meaning of the name Samuel is debated, but there is general agreement that his name has a close connection to “asked of” or “heard of” God.

Having been heard and answered, Hannah remains home with Samuel until he is weaned. She remains determined to fulfil her vow to dedicate Samuel to the Lord’s service once he is weaned (probably age 3 to 5). Her joy in God’s answer to her prayer does not in any way distract her from her commitment to give this boy in a special way to the Lord for His service.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What does it mean that God remembered Hannah?
2. Why did Hannah name her son Samuel?
3. What was she committed to doing once Samuel was weaned?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 62a
1. Confess, with your family, your willingness to keep your commitments to God
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading 1 Samuel 1:3-8 family conflict at worship

Notes
(See back page for authors)

Elkanah took his family to worship year by year. We are only briefly introduced to the place, Shiloh, and the priests, Eli, and his two sons, Hophni and Phineas. From Joshua’s time Shiloh had been a significant meeting place of God’s people. The tabernacle where God met with His people was there (Josh 18:1) This experience should have been marked with reverent, humble joy.

Instead, this family was torn with conflict, distress, and longing. Elkanah loved his childless wife and favoured her over his second wife. Peninnah, wife #2, probably in response to being unloved even though fruitful in child-bearing, provoked her rival severely. *Peninnah apparently used special worship occasions (vv. 3–4) for getting Hannah’s goat. Peninnah herself likely chafed under Elkanah’s obvious affection for Hannah (v. 5)... Year after year it went on—baiting Hannah, irritating her, winding her up until the sobs broke out.* (Davis) Elkanah loved Hannah, but couldn’t understand the depth of her grief, nor console her.

Elkanah, Hannah, and Peninnah knew the truth: God controls childbearing. Elkanah’s response was one of compassionate love. Hannah’s was deep grief. Peninnah’s was spiteful mocking. We can imagine her saying, “God has closed your womb, but I have all these children. Who do you think God loves most?” We would do well to be humbly thankful in blessing, patient in affliction, knowing God’s reason for His sovereign acts is often not clear to us.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. Where did Elkanah go to worship and sacrifice? Why?
2. As they went to worship how did Elkanah, Hannah, and Peninnah interact?
3. Why does God do His sovereign will?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 62a
1. Thank God for His sovereign control, even if it hurts.
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading 1 Samuel 1:7-11 Casting cares upon the Lord

Notes
(See back page for authors)

This trip to worship had been happening each year for many years. Peninnah’s taunts, and Hannah’s tears, had been happening for a long time. Perhaps Hannah had responded with prayer in the past – we simply don’t know. We do know though, that this year, following Elkanah’s comforting words, Hannah ate, then got up and prayed.

And pray she did. Though she didn’t know the reason for her childlessness she knew that God had closed her womb, and if it would be opened, God would have to do it. She brought her bitterness of soul and anguish (v10), her sorrowful spirit (v15) to the God who controls the armies of heavens (Lord of hosts). Her confidence in God’s control did not lead her to fatalism, nor resentment, but rather to prayer.

In her prayer she called on God based on his faithfulness to his people’s affliction in the past (v11 cf. Ex 3:7, 4:31). *Hannah assumes that the God who has “certainly seen the affliction” of a corporate people can as certainly be expected to see the distress of an individual servant. Nor does she ask that her son—should Yahweh grant him—be famous or prominent; all that matters is that he will belong to Yahweh.* (Davis)

Might we pray in our distress to the God who controls all our circumstances. He will answer. He will do all His holy will.

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What does Hannah do in her grief?
2. How does she pray?
3. Why does she pray?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 62a
1. Commit yourself and your family to pray – in delight and in despair – with God’s help.
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading 1 Samuel 1:12-18 Go in peace. May God grant your request

Notes
(See back page for authors)

As Hannah stands praying with her anguished soul Eli is watching her. He sees that *she is praying but “speaking in her heart” (v. 13); her lips were moving but there was no audible sound. So Eli mistook her earnestness for drunkenness. Another soused woman, half-crooked after the sacrificial meal!* (Davis) This misdiagnosis probably says more about the state of Israel’s behaviour than about Eli’s powers of observation.

Hannah assures him that she is praying, not drunk – that she is pouring out her anguished soul before the Lord. Understanding now, Eli blesses her with his desire that God answer her prayer.

Unknown to Eli he introduced a play on words that will be developed by the end of this chapter. “Your petition that you have made” is, very literally, “your asking that you have asked.” This vocabulary of asking occurs seven times in this chapter with interesting implications that we will see. (Woodhouse)

After praying, Hannah went away changed. Her grief was lifted. Her face was not sad any longer. She ate (again). Eli’s “Go in peace,” truly took place in her heart. She had the hope of God answering her prayer as she had asked, but this change took place before the answer was given. *We may well say that she had cast all her anxiety on the Lord, knowing that he cared for her. Certainly she had humbled herself under God’s mighty hand, and he had exalted her (cf. 1 Peter 5:6, 7).* (Woodhouse)

Questions
(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. What does Eli think as he sees Hannah praying?
2. How does she respond to his accusation?
3. What was her response to praying and Eli’s blessing? Why?

4.     

Praise Pray

- Psalm 62a
1. Rejoice with your family in prayer that God hears our prayer
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member