

Teach Us to Pray – Hannah ‘s Prayer **June 22 | Group Guide**

Begin with a sermon series recap and reflection (10 minutes).

When the disciples asked Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray,” they were seeking to emulate the words of our greatest Teacher and find a deeper connection with God the Father. Today, we’re asking the same. In this six-week series, we’ll echo that ancient request and allow God Himself to be our guide. Teach Us to Pray explores six powerful prayers from the Old Testament – prayers from real people in real need. Their cries for help varied from forgiveness to healing to blessing to deliverance, but each of them reveals a rich, honest, and dynamic connectivity to God. Together, we’ll learn not only how to pray, but how to live in ongoing, transformative relationship with the One who hears.

To that end, we’re going to look at several Old Testament examples of prayer. This week, we meet Hannah, a woman in ancient Israel who prayed to God in desperation out of her broken heart.

- Have you ever experienced or witnessed a miraculous answer to prayer?
- Where (or to whom) do you turn when you are in desperate need of help?

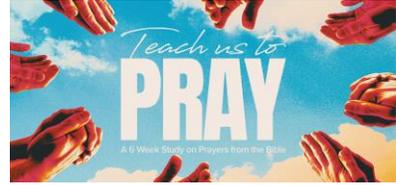
Read 1 Samuel 1 and discuss the sermon (30 minutes).

In his sermon, Dan discussed the barrenness experienced by God’s people at this point in their history (around 1100 BC). Their crops were raided by invaders and the people and their leaders were morally bankrupt. Israel was a spiritually barren place. As a new era of their history begins, we are introduced to Hannah, a woman who was experiencing physical barrenness – the inability to conceive a child.

- Where are you experiencing “barrenness” in your own life? Think in terms of places that feel dry or empty. Situations that seem difficult or even hopeless.

Read 1 Samuel 1:1-20. As you read and listen, picture the scene in your mind.

- What moments or details stood out to you as you listened?
- Think back to the “barrenness” in your life you mentioned earlier. What can you learn from Hannah about approaching God in your time of need?



Dan talked about how Hannah prayed consistently (year after year) and honestly (with all her raw emotion).

- Do you struggle to pray consistently and/or honestly? If so, why?

Hannah's prayers of desperation are answered when Samuel is born. But both Hannah's barrenness and her blessing were ordained by God. He chose Hannah to be part of His larger plan.

- Can you remember a time when God used a season of barrenness in your life to do a significant work in you or through you (or both)? Encourage others in your group by sharing your story.
- For those of you currently in a time of desperation and barrenness, what is God inviting you to notice? What does He have for you in this time?

Dan explained that Hannah didn't just experience *desperation*. She chose *consecration*. She set Samuel apart for God's purposes. She recognized that the blessing of this child was not just for her enjoyment, but for God's kingdom.

- What blessings are you currently experiencing that God may be asking you to offer back to Him for His purposes?
- Think about the things you've been asking God for lately. How would thinking "how would this answered prayer bless God's kingdom?" shape what you ask for?
- What else stood out to you from this Scripture passage or this week's sermon?

Break into separate groups (men and women) to pray (15 minutes).

Life group is a beautiful place to share your prayers of desperation. Separate into groups of men and women. Rather than sharing your prayer requests and *then* praying, simply "pray your request." Pour your heart out to God as Hannah did, either for your own needs or for the needs of someone close to you. After each person prays, others in the group can pray for that same need. We don't need to know all the details to pray for each other. Our Heavenly Father knows them. As you in *desperation*, think about *consecration*—how can God be glorified in your situation, whether He answers your request with a "yes" or not?

Come back together for a closing prayer in Psalm 34 (5 minutes).



Prayerfully read Psalm 34 aloud together. You may choose one person to read the entire Psalm or divide it up. Use David's words as your own prayer of desperation and consecration.