

Address: 160 Paya Lebar Road, Orion@Paya Lebar #04-06, Singapore 409022  
Sun Worship Service: 10am, Sun School: 11.45am, Wed Prayer Meeting: 8pm  
Website: [www.sovereignhopebpc.org](http://www.sovereignhopebpc.org)  
Rev Dr Jack Sin: 91160948 (hp) / [jacksin710@gmail.com](mailto:jacksin710@gmail.com)  
Elder Loke Tat Luen: [lloke822@gmail.com](mailto:lloke822@gmail.com)

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## The Portrait of a God-Fearing Mother

Of all the women in the Old Testament, there is one who is outstanding in her character and her handling of trials that is worthy of our consideration. Hannah, the mother of Samuel, (arguably one of the finest prophets of ancient Israel during the United Kingdom period), is a model for all Christian mothers to emulate today on Mother's Day. We shall consider her life under five headings:-

### The Plight of Hannah

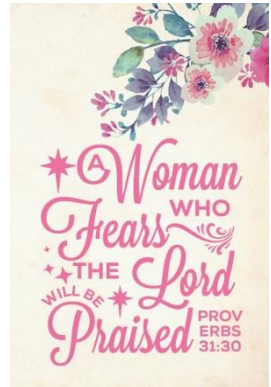
Man's adversity is God's opportunity. It is the desire of almost every woman to bear children and nurse them.

Hannah was no exception but there is one complication. She was barren and could not bear children. It was seen as a liability in those days but God is sovereign and we are to seek His sovereign will. Those without Christ are truly fruitless and are incapable of bearing the fruits of repentance through the Spirit, only Christ can save us in our deepest predicament.

**We are in a desperate condition of sin and depravity and we need Christ to redeem us out of our iniquity and the consequences thereof (Rom 3:10,23). But Hannah did not remain in the doldrums of barrenness but seek divine assistance from the Only One that can possibly salvage us from this desperate plight of spiritual and physical fruitlessness.**

### The Prayer of Hannah

We live in a world of global communication in which we are in constant touch with one another around the world; be it in the email, letter, phone, fax, video conferencing over the cyberspace.



Contactability is an asset, and one cannot afford not to have these days. I have an announcement to make. We have a direct line to heaven to the King of kings and Lord of lords who rules and sustain the affairs of men in this life and the next. Hannah did not confer with flesh or blood but pour out the anguish of her soul to the God of Israel who could assist her in her condition. **She was fervent and importunate in her intercessions, fasting and repenting bitterly.** John 16:24 says, *“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”* Often, we do not have because we do not ask and even if we do, we do not ask it with all tenacity of heart and soul. Hannah’s request will not fall on deaf ears. These are four answers to prayer, namely;



1. Direct - Yes
2. Denial - No
3. Delayed -Wait
4. Different – Something else (better)

**Each answer from God is superior to our original personal preference according to God’s sovereign will and plan.** As Hannah prayed, she made a vow to God that she will dedicate her own child to Him in return to serve Him. Ecc 5:4,5 say, *“When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.”*

**It is not mandatory that we make vows but if we ever do, let us remember to honour and keep them before the Lord Almighty. Hannah’s prayers are specific, and she made a commitment to God which she would honour later.** Do you remember your promises made before heaven and are you keeping your side of the bargain? An unfulfilled vow to the Lord has its dire consequences. Let us be careful and remember to honour and pay our vows/pledges to both God and man.

### **The Promises made to Hannah**

Eli was the High Priest of the temple at that time, and he noted the distress of this damsel and approached to enquire about it initially. He thought she was drunk, but she was not, and she explained the burden of her soul. Later Eli made a promise to her that God would answer her prayer and that she will be granted her petition. What is a joy it is to worship and pray to a prayer answering God and Hannah believed God, trusting this promise and was no longer sad, and started eating again. In the fullness of time, she bore a man-child, whom she named Samuel. God is ever nigh to hear our cries, but do we bring our petition to Him daily? 2 Chron 7:14 says, *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”* We need to pray zealously, repent sincerely and humble ourselves and seek Him fervently as well.

## **The Pledge fulfilled by Hannah**

**It is one thing to experience answers to prayers, but it is another to return thanks and to remember to give God the glory.** Hannah raised her child for probably about 2-3 years. She remembered her vow and brought young Samuel to the temple to be dedicated to the Lord in fulltime service under Eli. This is a good testimony for us to follow.

Her son, Samuel, an answer to his mother's vow, was one of the most influential religious leaders of ancient Israel for a long time to come. (Remember Samuel was the one who identified David and anointed him). This all come from a praying mother who is serious about honouring God with His children. What is your ambition for your children today? Is it to be a lawyer or doctor or servant of the Lord? Give time to the Lord in consecration and prayer and let the Lord use them.

## **The Praise of Jehovah by Hannah**

Hannah in 1 Sam 2:1-3 expressed her heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to God in a song. Is it not 10 lepers that are healed and only one returned to give thanks? She worshipped, extolled the name of Jehovah and honoured God with her public testimony. Do we remember the Lord and give glory to Him or do we rob God of His glory and honour? The prophet Jeremiah in Jer 9:23,24 say, *"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD"* and David says in Ps 136:1,2 *"O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever."* **The 24 elders in heaven give praise and honour to God in that majestic scene of everlasting worship in heaven (Rev 4:11,12), let us remember to give glory and honour to the Lord.**

## **Conclusion**

It is a great blessing and challenge to be a mother today. There are many heartaches and yet a joy to nurture God-given children in the fear and admonition of the Lord in a covenant home. We live in a world of spiritual and moral downslide, and this has affected the family, Church and nation. **Every parent has a vital role to play to check the spiritual decay of his or her own children. As we pay tribute and recognise Christian mothers in our midst today, let us also remember our solemn responsibility and duty to God and to our children to bring them up in the fear and nurture of our Lord.**

*Jack Sin*

*(This article is translated into Chinese, Bahasa Indonesia, Burmese, Chin and Swahili for the edifying of the saints in different countries on this blessed occasion.)*

## Memory Verse

*Matt 25:21* His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

## Announcements

1. Welcome to our Worship Service! If you are here for the first time, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave. Those who share the church vision to acquire a place of worship in due time, may designate your offerings to the SHBPC Church Building Fund.
2. Pastor brings us God's Word this morning on "***Discipline of Discipline of Faithful Stewardship [Matt 25:14-30]***", the quarterly series on "***Christian Disciplines in the Lord***".
3. Next Sunday, Pastor will preach on "***Discipline of Contentment [1Tim 6:1-10]***".
4. Sunday School classes after the worship service continue as follows:
  - How to Interpret the Bible (Pastor)
  - Studies in 2 Chronicles (Dr Kwong Leen)
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on every Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. We have systematic studies on Old Testament Foundations and the 10 Commandments. Join us for a time of profitable learning. [**Zoom ID:883 9662 4157 Passcode: 218178**].
6. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church. [Zoom ID:863 7527 5431 Passcode: 625551].
7. Pray for:
  - Visa approval and travel arrangements for Rev David Khobal (our camp speaker) and Eld Habakkuk to Singapore.
  - Travels: Peter (26/4-15/5), John Wong (3-23 May), Perry (17/4-16/5)
  - Daniel's medical diagnosis of high blood pressure condition.
  - Kin Hoong's management of heart and lungs condition.
  - Anthony's recovery from radiotherapy and lung cancer.
8. **Annual Church Camp** will be held on **June 11-14, 2024**, at **Lotus Desaru Beach Resort** on the theme "***Biblical Pathway for Church Growth & Health***". Rev David Khobal, Principal of Myanmar Theological Seminary, will be our Camp Speaker. Contact Dn Yue Kay (hp:97450311) or Dn Paul (hp:97314733) for more details and registration by **TODAY**.
9. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
  - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
  - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
  - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**

Kindly indicate "**Church Building Fund**" if you would like to designate towards this cause.