

COMMUNITY GROUP WEEKLY DISCUSSION GUIDE  
WEEK OF MARCH 7TH, 2010

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

A Victorious Limp

"Every problem is a theological problem, and the habitual discontent of us singles is no exception...I long to be married. My younger sister got married two months ago but God cannot be less good to me. It is a cosmic impossibility for God to shortchange any of his children...it is a cosmic impossibility that anything could be better for me now than being single. You see, we singles are chronic amnesiacs – we forget who we are, we forget whose we are. I'm a single Christian. My ID is not found in my marital status but in my redemptive status. I may meet someone and walk down the aisle in the next couple of years because God is so good to me. I may never have another date and die an old maid at 93 because God is so good to me. Not my will but his be done. Until then I am claiming as my theme verse, 'If any man would come after me, let him...'"

-Paige Benton Brown

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

-James 1:17

THIS WEEK'S TEXT

1 Samuel 1:4-11, 2:6-10

MEMORY VERSES

This Week: 1 Samuel 2:6-8

RELATED TEXTS TO EXPLORE

1 Sam 1:4 – Deut 12:17-18, 16:11; Neh 8:10-12; 1 Sam 1:8 – Ruth 4:15; 1 Sam 1:10 – Job 7:11, 10:1; 1 Sam 1:11 – Gen 28:20, 29:32, 30:22; Judges 11:30, 13:5, Num 6:5; 1 Sam 2:6 – Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:7 – Job 1:21, 5:11, Ps 75:7; 1 Sam 2:8 – Ps 24:2, 102:25, 104:5, 113:7-8, Dan 4:17, Luke 1:52, Job 36:7, 38:4-6; 1 Sam 2:10 – Ps 2:9, 18:13, 89:24, 96:10-13, 98:9; 1 Sam 7:10; 2 Sam 22:14,

STUDY GUIDE

- What observations can be made about:
  - The characters in this story: Elkanah, Peninnah, & Hannah
  - The way that God interacts with each of these, and what the author says about each
  - The way Hannah prays
  - The content of Hannah's prayer – its poetry & its theology
  - Hannah's personal character, difficult circumstance, and thoughtful response
- What does each of these things mean? What did they mean for the original readers, what do they mean for us now?

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Use any or as many of these questions as will be helpful for your discussion.

- What has God spoken to you about this week regarding the sermon or passage?
- What does this passage reveal to us about Jesus?
- How does this passage enhance our understanding of the Gospel?
- What does this text mean for us as a community? Individually? How does it free us to be the people God intends for us to be?
- How do we need to live out the meaning of this text in our city?
- It was stated this week that, "God constantly surprises us with unexpected things." What do you sense that God has surprised you with recently? Why do you think he has done that?
- What response does the statement, "God does his best work with the unworthy and the weak", elicit from you? What does this say about God? About us?
- Children could easily become idols for people in the ancient near east because of their great importance. What good thing do you sense has become an idol in your heart?
- The pastor said this week that, "earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal." Where do you see evidence for this in the Bible? Have you experienced this?
- Jesus was presented this week as the true and better Elkanah, the truer and better Samuel, and the truer and better Hannah. Why and what does that mean for us?

"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

-Jesus, Matthew 11:29

## IN THE MEDIA

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/03/07/south.korea.baby.dead/index.html?hpt=T2>

## FURTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDY AND PREPARATION

- *Leap Over A Wall* – Eugene Peterson

## NEXT WEEK'S TEXT

Hebrews 4:14-5:10

40 DAYS OF PRAYER  
COMMUNITY GROUP WEEKLY PRAYER GUIDE  
WEEK OF MARCH 7TH, 2010

PREPARING TO PRAY

“Mercy is spontaneous, superabounding love which comes from an experience of the grace of God. The deeper the experience of the free grace of God, the more generous we must become...The grace of God makes Christ precious to us, so that our possessions, our money, our time have all become eternally and utterly expendable. They used to be crucial to our happiness. They are not so now.”

Timothy Keller, Ministries of Mercy

“Truly, I say to you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”  
Jesus, Matthew 25:40

THIS WEEK’S PRAYER FOCUS

**For the Vision and Direction of the church:**

**RENEWAL** – That we would have greater compassion for our poor and marginalized neighbors, exhibit greater acts of mercy and justice towards them, and strive for the social, personal and spiritual renewal of our city and our world.

Before praying, you or someone else in the group might set the stage for this focus by sharing briefly about their vision for renewal in this city and how they see God bringing it about even now through his people.

Pray for:

- Our Community Groups to experience deepening commitment to the poor and oppressed in New York City
- Our Community Group Gatherings to serve their neighborhoods creatively and faithfully so that the city would see the renewing effects of the gospel being lived out
- Hope for New York, our mercy and justice partner organization – for their staff, board and partner organizations
- For the current HFNY Team Leaders at Apostles Church to be able to lead effectively, and for more passionate leaders in this area to emerge
- The Easter Renewal Offering: That the people of Apostles Church would respond generously and with great joy with their resources – both time and finances – in service to the poor and marginalized
- For all of the neighborhood churches in NYC – that they would have favor with their communities as they proclaim the beauty of the Gospel in both word and deed
- Our local and state government – for elected and appointed officials of integrity who are careful to legislate and govern with deep character

**Praying In Response to the This Week’s Text:**

- Praising God for his patience towards us
- Confessing our idols to which we look for identity, satisfaction, security and life
- Thanking God for being truly all-satisfying and allowing us to experience that
- Asking God to bless our families – both those that are already and those that are yet to be