

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE

Christmas ①

INTRODUCTION | “A child offered to the Lord”

Today’s passage reveals the core of our problems in life. It also shows how a new life opens when you connect with God through prayer. Finally, it teaches us that God intervenes in our life by bringing his grace. These are our three points: “the core of our life problems”, “the effect of prayer” and “God’s intervention”.

SCRIPTURE | 1 Samuel 1:1-20

1 There was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. 2 He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none. 3 Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the Lord Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the Lord. 4 Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. 5 But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the Lord had closed her womb. 6 Because the Lord had closed Hannah’s womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. 7 This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. 8 Her husband Elkanah would say to her, “Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don’t you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don’t I mean more to you than ten sons?” 9 Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the Lord’s house. 10 In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly. 11 And she made a vow, saying, “Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.” 12 As she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. 13 Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk 14 and said to her, “How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine.” 15 “Not so, my lord,” Hannah replied, “I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the Lord. 16 Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief.” 17 Eli answered, “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.” 18 She said, “May your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast. 19 Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the Lord and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the Lord remembered her. 20 So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, “Because I asked the Lord for him.”

QUESTIONS |

- 1: (verses 1-8) What kind of family is Elkanah and his two wives? What good qualities and what problems do they have?
- 2: What is the core of their problems? What are the reasons why this situation happened. Share if you face the same kind of situation in your life or in your circle of relationships.
- 3: (verses 9-16) What is Hannah’s attitude when she prays? What does she ask for? What do you learn from her to improve your own prayer life?
- 4: (verses 17-18) How does Hannah change after praying? Why? (reference: 1 John 5:14-15)

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE

5: (verses 19-20) How does God answer to Hannah's prayer? From this answer, how can you qualify the God of the Bible? (reference: Jeremiah 23:24)

6: Share if there is something you are struggling with or requesting to God. Pray for each other.

REFERENCES |

1 John 5:14-15

14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

Jeremiah 23:24

Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?" declares the Lord.

"Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the Lord.

PRAYER |

- God reveals us the core of our problems and takes care of them. Meditate on what your idols are and repent.
- God intervenes in our lives through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Meditate on the qualities of God, who leads you. Be thankful and praise him. Pray also for the people you would like to share the good news of Christmas with.

UPCOMING EVENTS | This Week & Next Week

Lunchtime meeting (20 Akasaka, 21 Kasumigaseki, 22 Otemachi)

Retirement home visit (24)

Worship & fellowship (25 Christmas service) from 14:00 @TKP Garden City Takebashi

Worship & fellowship

(2017/1/1 "the light of the Gospel reflecting Christ's glory" from 14:00 @Ginza Shochiku Square