

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

August 16, 2026

EVERYDAY

When Your Heart is Heavy

1 Samuel 1:1–10

Pastor Matt Manning

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everyday
there's more to prayer
than you've ever imagined

NOTES

Pastor Matt asks some hard questions with which many people struggle: do our prayers really make a difference, especially when life gets challenging? Some people even wonder, if God is sovereign and he's going to do what God is going to do, what difference does my prayer really make? And here's the thing: those conclusions may feel genuine in the middle of our pain, but they aren't true.

MY STORY

Describe a time when you asked for a needed miracle — and it didn't happen.

WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO HEAR?

Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?" After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. (1 Samuel 1:5-10)

Looking back at your notes from this week's message, was there anything you heard for the first time, stuck with you, challenged or confused you?

What is the one important thing you will take away from this weekend's message or our community group discussion? Is there any challenge, difficulty or praise that you would like to share with the group for prayer?

Why do you think Elkanah would win the clueless husband of the year award?

What is significant about the phrase, "The Lord had closed [Hannah's] womb?"

What deep emotions were driving Hannah to prayer? What was causing those profound feelings?



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What does God want us to hear? Based on the passages above, what are the factual “takeaways” that are meaningful to you?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO DO?

Pastor Matt said, *“As we listen to Hannah's prayer, maybe you noticed two words she keeps coming back to: Lord and servant. In the middle of her greatest heartbreak, she does not forget that God is her Lord, high and wise above her, nor that she is his servant, bound to do his will.”*

Why do tragedies or difficult circumstances tend to bring to the surface heart issues that have long stayed dormant?

Extra credit: Describe how this happened in the story of Job in the Old Testament.

To Elkanah’s credit, he did ask his wife three questions to get her to tell him why she was sad.

Why is it usually helpful for people who are grieving to talk about the things that happened that led to their great sadness?

What does God want us to do? Flowing from our reading and interpretation, what action does this passage or the Spirit’s nudging us toward?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

What’s the one request in your life that God seems to consistently say “no” to? How has that impacted your spiritual growth?

How have you seen God turn a tragic circumstance in your life into something that caused substantial spiritual growth for you, or for others?

How are you doing in the grieving process of whatever significant loss you experienced during that time?

How can you effectively walk with someone this week who is going through a challenging time – without essentially telling them to just ‘look on the bright side of life’?

What does God want ME to do? What is the personal application and action step that the Holy Spirit is calling you toward?