

# Asking for what we really want



Richard Dormandy *reflects on* 1 Samuel 1:20-end

**H**ave you ever rejoiced when a prayer was answered? We often thank God for things we didn't actually ask for because we didn't ask very specifically in the first place.

Hannah names her boy Samuel (meaning "asked of God") because she asked the Lord for him. In gratitude she takes him to serve at the shrine where her prayer had been most memorably focused. To Eli the priest she explains, "For this child I prayed; and the Lord has granted me the petition that I made to him... Therefore I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives".

It might be thought a little strange that Hannah, who so wanted a child, gives him up so quickly. Where would be the joy in raising him? One reason she was so desperate to conceive was to end the shame of barrenness and the taunting of her rival Peninnah. Her song in chapter 2 expands on this – a song of delight that God has taken notice of the lowly and humble. This helps to explain "lending" him to God. Her prayer has been answered and she's satisfied.

So often we fail to ask specifically, so we can't write a song like Hannah's. Do we consider it childish to ask like this? Maybe we become tired of disappointment, or misinterpret "no" for silence. Yet it's only when we honestly pray for what we actually want that we develop the conversation of personal petitionary prayer.

Rejoicing in God's "yes" and dealing with "no" is the bread and butter of prayer. 🙏

**Heavenly Father, this Lent, help me pray more specifically and so enter a more meaningful conversation with you. Amen.**

## Words from the cross, part 4

### A series for Lent

by Caroline Fletcher

*"Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" Mark 15:34*

Are there times you have felt particularly close to God – perhaps at a retreat, when coming to faith, or during a difficult period?

Jesus knew such intimacy with God at all times. He never did anything without first being guided by God, and so close was their relationship that he called God Father. Indeed, it is likely that

in the original Aramaic he actually addressed God as "Abba", a word close in meaning to "Daddy". On the cross, this closeness and communion with God was broken, as he took upon himself the sins of the world and a barrier was created between Jesus and his Father.

It was this loss of intimacy which caused this cry of devastation, for this relationship was his most valuable thing, the most painful thing to lose. Life without his Father's love was unbearable, and he died because he wanted us to know that love too. How precious is the Father's love to us? 🙏

**“God instructs the heart not by ideas, but by pains and contradictions.”**

Jean Pierre de Caussade (1675-1751), French Jesuit priest and writer

## Finding God in the spring

by Caroline Hodgson

We put our clocks forward this morning in order to make the most of the season, and once the evenings are lighter we really start to feel the first stirrings of the coming summer – to my mind the most joyful of seasons. If you are planting nasturtiums, they will create a vibrant splash

of colour in the late summer. At the end of the season you can dry the seeds produced by the flowers and keep them to plant next spring – a reminder of the continuity of the seasons. And did you know that you can eat nasturtium flowers? Check them for insects, and use them to brighten up a summer salad, and add some home-grown rocket to give it bite. Before you eat what you have grown, give thanks with this simple grace:

We bring this food before you, Lord, and we give you thanks for, once again, turning the wheel of your seasons. Amen. 🙏