

Power Points

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Thought for the Day, 13 July 2020

1 Samuel 1.1-20; (Luke 19.28-40)



The lectionary sometimes skips the hard bits. We've jumped over brutal, anti-feminist chapters of Judges; also the lovely tale of Ruth and Naomi, scheduled previously. Today we start 1 Samuel, with the inspiring story of Hannah, model for Mary. In patriarchal society, a woman's status depended on her breeding, especially having a son. Hannah, it seemed, was infertile.

Pray for people currently undergoing IVF, with all its stress, anticipation, hopes and setbacks.

In some texts, Hannah "presented herself before the LORD", distressed, weeping, mouthing prayer. Eli, the priest, was unimpressed. He leapt to conclusions. She was a worthless woman, drunk too. She should stop making a spectacle of herself.

How often do *we* leap to the wrong conclusion, judging, dismissing a person on their clothes, appearance, the alcohol on their breath?

Eli was converted; he gave Hannah his blessing. In time she had her son, and he called out wrongdoing in Eli's family; he tried to prevent Israel starting a monarchy, with the abuses of power that monarchy entails. Power is abused today, by governments and armies, presidents and prime ministers.

Is power what it's all about? Faced with kings and military power, Eli and religious power, Hannah, powerless Hannah, is God's agent for change. Later, powerless Mary became God-bearer. Jesus chose a donkey rather than a king's horse. His victory path was nonviolent, powerless.

Today, destitution is growing; can *we* see God in powerless people?

Few of us are totally powerless. What power do *you* have?

Power in relationships, within your household?

Power to campaign, influence, vote?

Power in buying – or boycotting - things, taking régimes, environment, working practices into account?

Power over how you spend your time: for yourself only, or for others?

Present yourself before the Lord.

Pray for a right use of *your* power.