



Welcome

Message: A Matter of Time
Dr. Lance Watson, Senior Pastor

PRAYER: Gracious God, as we enter your presence together, we acknowledge that You make everything beautiful in its time and have placed eternity within our hearts. Though we may experience seasons of waiting, grief, or distress—much like Hannah as she poured out her heart in persistent prayer—we trust in Your divine timing and your unfailing purpose working through the ages. Teach us to surrender our impatience and anxiety to You, trusting that You hear every silent cry and remember every faithful petition. Grant us the peace to walk forward in grace, confident that You hold our past, present, and future, and that your perfect plan will be revealed in Your perfect time. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

ICEBREAKER: If you could ask God to instantly fast-forward and fulfill one prayer you are currently waiting on, which prayer would you choose?

INTRODUCTION: Both Ecclesiastes 3:11 and 1 Samuel 1:9–18 highlight the interplay between human timing and divine orchestration, demonstrating that God works according to a higher, eternal schedule even while humanity experiences periods of deep, earthly waiting. Ecclesiastes 3:11 establishes that God makes everything beautiful in its own time and places an innate sense of eternity within human hearts, even though people cannot fully grasp the complete timeline of God's overarching work from beginning to end. This divine principle is practically illustrated in 1 Samuel 1:9–18 through Hannah's story, where she endures a prolonged period of affliction and unanswered desire, pouring out her soul in persistent prayer despite being misunderstood. Together, these scriptures reveal that human waiting is not wasted; rather, God uses seasons of distress and sustained petitioning to align human desires with His perfect, ordained timing, ultimately bringing peace and fulfilling His purpose at the appointed time.

BIBLE STUDY: Read Ecclesiastes 3:11 (AMPC): He has made everything beautiful in its time. He also has planted eternity in men's hearts *and* minds [a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy], yet so that men cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

Read 1 Samuel 1:9-18 (AMPC): ⁹ So Hannah rose after they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his seat beside a post of the temple (tent) of the Lord. ¹⁰ And [Hannah] was in distress of soul, praying to the Lord and weeping bitterly. ¹¹ She vowed, saying, O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your handmaid and [earnestly] remember, and not forget Your handmaid but will give me a son, I will give him to the Lord all his life; no razor shall touch his head. ¹² And as she continued praying before the Lord, Eli noticed her mouth. ¹³ Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved but her voice was not heard. So, Eli thought she was drunk. ¹⁴ Eli said to her, How long will you be intoxicated? Put wine away from you. ¹⁵ But Hannah answered, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I was pouring out my soul before the Lord. ¹⁶ Regard not your handmaid as a wicked woman; for out of my great complaint and bitter provocation I have been speaking. ¹⁷ Then Eli said, Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him. ¹⁸ Hannah said, Let your handmaid find grace in your sight. So, [she] went her way and ate, her countenance no longer sad.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. **What was your biggest takeaway from the message?** What's one thing you learned? What questions came to mind as you listened to the message? What points did you find most insightful?
2. **Trusting God's Timing:** Ecclesiastes 3:11 mentions that God makes everything "beautiful in its time". Looking at Hannah's period of waiting and distress in 1 Samuel 1:9-18, what is an area in your life where you are currently waiting on God's timing, and how can you shift your perspective to trust His overall plan?
3. **Navigating Misunderstanding During Waiting:** Hannah's prolonged petition and deep prayer were misunderstood by Eli as drunkenness. How do you handle feelings of isolation, judgment, or misunderstanding from others while you are waiting on God to answer a deeply personal prayer?
4. **Eternity in Our Hearts vs. Temporal Impatience:** Ecclesiastes 3:11 speaks of God planting "eternity in men's hearts and minds" while keeping the full scope of His work hidden from beginning to end. How does having an eternal perspective help you overcome the frustration of not knowing the immediate timeline or outcome of your current season?
5. **Moving from Anguish to Peace Before the Answer Arrives:** In 1 Samuel 1:18, Hannah's countenance was no longer sad *after* she poured out her soul and received a blessing, even before her prayer was physically fulfilled. What practical steps can we take to experience God's peace during our waiting periods, rather than holding on to anxiety until the outcome changes?

LIVE IT OUT: Trust God's perfect timing by continuously bringing your heart's deep longings to Him in prayer while resting in the assurance that He makes everything beautiful in its proper time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Take this time to share group announcements. Announcements can be found at www.myspbc.org. You can also "find, follow and like" our Facebook page at facebook.com/myspbc. Turn on your notifications. Remember to subscribe to our YouTube channel!

CELEBRATIONS: Take this time to share praise reports (e.g. answered prayers, birthdays, anniversaries, promotions).

PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAYER: Take this time to share prayer requests. Close with prayer.

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We Care!

NOTICE: As a small group leader, we depend on you to show members that we care. Here's a list of resources to help you.

FOR PRAYER:

CALL: 804.463.2472

EMAIL: prayer@myspbc.org.

FOR COUNSELING:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org

TO REQUEST A HOSPITAL VISIT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (For Emergencies)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST FUNERAL SUPPORT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (Pastor On Call)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO FIND A SUPPORT GROUP:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:

CALL: 804.643.4000

EMAIL: emergencyassistance@myspbc.org.

TO CONTACT MY LIFE STAGE PASTOR: CALL: 804.643.4000 and Press 1 for the Dial by Name Directory

EMAIL:

- Imagination (0-10): Vernita Williams: Vernita.Williams@myspbc.org
- SMB (11-19): Martina Jones-Smith: Martina.Jones-Smith@myspbc.org
- Dreamchasers (20-29): Juan Shackelford: juan.shackelford@myspbc.org
- Aspire (30-39): Lance Watson, Jr.: lance.watsonjr@myspbc.org
- Fusion (40-49): Michelle Townsend: michelle.townsend@myspbc.org
- Encore (50-59): Lisa Johnson: lisa.johnson@myspbc.org.
- Prime Time (60-69): Maceo Freeman: maceo.freeman@myspbc.org
- Refiners (70+): Roscoe Jones: roscoe.jones@myspbc.org

*GPS is a study guide based on the weekend message. The purpose of this guide is to assist small groups in study.
Previous GPS Guides are available online at www.myspbc.org.*



Small Group Leader Guide

Would you like to START or JOIN a Small Group at Saint Paul's?

Most existing groups are open to new group members, and new groups begin on a regular basis. If you have friends in a small group, ask about joining their group. If you are new to Saint Paul's and are looking for a place to connect, please feel free to contact us and we will do our best to help you find the right group.

Leader Tips:

The GPS document is a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you must use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through while others will be over in a few seconds!

1. Don't teach the lesson. The lesson was taught on the weekend. Just ask questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our small groups. So, have fun with the people in your group.

Agenda for a Small Group Gathering

Gathering Time

Take 5-10 minutes to welcome everyone, catch up and if planned, share some food!

Discussion Time

Here's a suggested format:

1. **Ice Breaker** – Lighthearted icebreaker question (5-10 min.)
2. **Discussion** - Discussion time, Bible study, application challenge (30-40 min.)
3. **Prayer** – Prayer requests and praying for one another (10-20 min.)
4. **Planning** – Remind the group of how we serve together (e.g. usher, sing, greet, pray, etc.)