

Homegroup Notes for Week Beginning January 5th 2026.

Introduction:

For the first part of this term, we will be looking at stories from 1 Samuel under the title, 'God rules, OK?'

One of, if not *the* central prayer of scripture is the heart of the Lord's Prayer where Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, '*Your will be done, your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.*' It outlines the end of the biblical narrative where the rule of God is realised and experienced on earth, where people live harmoniously out of the character of Christ and steward creation together in such a way as to bring glory to God. When we pray '*Your will be done, your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven*', this is what we are praying. It brings together our plans for the world, for ourselves and for the church. We want to see God's will done in our hearts and our lives, the church is commissioned to be an alternative society acting as a beacon in a world of sin and we seek for the reconciliation of all things, where God's perfect reign brings peace to our world.

The series we are looking at in 1 Samuel, like many of the biblical accounts in the Old Testament, sees the people wrestling with being able to live with God as their LORD or their king. Put otherwise, it is a wrestle played out in the hearts of sinful people about whether they want to live in such a way as to communicate that 'God rules OK'. It is only in the New Testament, in the person of Christ that this is lived out faithfully.

1 Samuel happens at a particular stage in the story of God and his people. The call of the Old Testament is for Israel to be a 'light for the nations' by living in accordance with God's will under his 'kingship' and distinctively. They are to be a distinctive people, different and holy- and yet they want to be like the other nations.

This tension is worked out in the stories of Samuel and Saul.

This tension is worked out in our hearts as well- Romans 12.1-2 addresses this directly, as does the fresh commission of the church in 1 Peter 2.9-10.

This year will also see a number of different opportunities to deepen our prayer life and explore different modes of prayer together. In the evening service, we will be looking at what it is to 'seek God', through teaching and practice. In house groups too, you may be asking God for a fresh vision for your group, what is God saying to you, how can you grow together to become more fully a community reflecting that Christian prayer, '*Your will be done, your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven*', encouraging one another to live a life that communicates 'God rules OK!'

The following resources may be helpful:

Bible Project Summary video <https://bibleproject.com/videos/1-samuel/>

The Message of Samuel (BST) Mary Evans (exposition)

1 Samuel for you Tim Chester (exposition and application)

Samuel for Everyone John Goldingay (devotional)

1 Samuel 1.1-2.11



This series is called 'God Rules, OK?' At the beginning of a new year pause before you approach the study to ask a series of questions of the group. The group should be allowed to listen and pray silently to bring their responses before God as they become aware of their thoughts and feelings.

Here are some questions:

- This series is called 'God rules OK?' Does God rule OK in your life? How do you feel about God's rule in our life at this time?
- Does God rule OK in the world? This is clearly a faith position. Are you prepared to be part of the ministry of our church in shining as light in a dark world by living a life that says "God rules OK?"
- The Old Testament's most common refrain of prayer is 'The LORD is good and his love endures forever' (Psalm 100.5 and other places). How do you reflect on this declaration in your life at the beginning of 2026.
- Jesus taught us to pray, '*Your will be done, your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven*'. What does this mean for you at the beginning of this year?

Bring your thoughts, feelings and any resolve to God in prayer silently.

You may like to include listening to either of these songs, [Lord, Reign in Me](#) or [Reign in Me](#)



Read 1 Samuel 1

This is a story that may cause distress to some or stir upset.

Scripture tells the story of a creator God, who brings life from nothing and life from death and new creation out of old creation. Recount those Old Testament places where this principle is found beyond Genesis 1 and in anticipation of the birth of Christ.

(Sarai- Gen 18-21, Rebekkah- Gen 25, Rachel- Gen 30, Manoah's wife- Judges 13, Hannah- 1 Sam 1, Elizabeth, Luke 1)

You may also like to reflect on Isaiah 54.1.

- How do these stories lead us to think about faith and God's rescue?
- Can we believe in a God who can bring life from death? For whom **nothing** is impossible?
- How might we need to be waiting for God's promise rather than seeking to fix a situation ourselves? Abram did precisely this with Hagar (Gen 16)
- How do we pray for those times when this miraculous intervention does not come in spite of our prayers?
- How do we have a theology of suffering as well as a theology of faith in the God for whom nothing is impossible?
- How does this reflect our view of 'God rules OK?'

Hannah gives her child back to God. And this child becomes very significant in the story of Israel.

- What allowed Hannah to do this? What does it say about her view of God's rule in her life?
- What might it say to our attitude to times we are blessed and what we do with blessing?
- Hannah's song in 1 Samuel 2 is echoed largely in Mary's song, the Magnificat, in Luke 1.46-56. This song comes after the words of the angel announcing that Mary would conceive of the Holy Spirit and give birth to a Saviour. She carries God's rescue in her. In Luke 1.38, Mary says, '*I am the Lord's servant,*' Mary answered. '*May your word to me be fulfilled.*' What does this say about our life of faith, our freedom to choose and also the sovereignty of God and his goodness?



On Sunday we introduced a process in prayer that you might like to close with here. It sees three stages in prayer:

- Telling God what we want, speaking of our heart's desire
- Questioning this by asking what God wants in the situation
- Resolving to a place where we want what God wants, where God rules OK?

