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How to Make an Offering to God



As Richard Phillips relates in his commentary on **First Samuel**, **Hannah** provides an outstanding example in **her** attitude of gratitude, faithfulness, and generosity, in **her** spiritual partnership with **Elkanah, her** husband, and in **her** zeal to offer **her son** to **God's** service. Recognizing the unique features of her calling and service, we also realize that every believer is called to give to **the Lord** and serve in the cause of **His** Gospel. So how do we go about offering our gifts and services to **ADONAI**? **Hannah** models **three principles**: **she** acknowledged that what **she** offered came from **the Lord** and rightly belonged to **Him**; **her** offering involved considerable preparation and effort; **she** presented **herself** and **her** offering not in light of **her** own merits, but on the basis of **God's** mercy and grace.

First, what Hannah offered to God had come from Him in the first place. When **Hannah** brought young **Samuel** to **'Eli**, **the high priest**, **she** told **him, "O my lord, as sure as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here near you, praying to ADONAI. I prayed for this child, and ADONAI has granted the request I asked of Him" (First Samuel 1:26-27).** The only reason **Hannah** had something valuable to offer **the LORD** was that **God** had given **her the treasure** in the first place. **Paul** rightly asks: **Who has given a gift [to God] that He might be repaid (Romans 11:35).** Anything we might give to **ADONAI** is something that **He** made and enabled us to possess, including our talents, our wealth, and even our lives. This was the logic in **the first fruits** offerings of Isra'el's worship (see the commentary on **Leviticus, to see link click Ea – Resheet/First**

Fruits), just as it provided the logic in the tithes offered today: the first portion is brought to **the Lord** to show that the whole of what we are, and have, comes from and belongs to **Him**.

Understanding that everything belongs to **God** in the first place will greatly restrain our pride, which is always a temptation to those making offerings to **ADONAI**. Do you devote your mind to studying **God's Word**? This is only appropriate, since your intellect was given to you by **YHVH**. Do you offer your tithe to **the Lord**? It was **Ha'Shem** who gave you the ability and the opportunity to earn your money, so it is only fitting that you acknowledge **His** right to it. We are not performing some extraordinary and praiseworthy service when we obey **God's Word**, and live as **ADONAI** calls us to do, offering our talents, time, and money to **Him**. As **Paul** reminded **the Corinthians, "What do you have that you didn't receive as a gift? And since in fact it was a gift** which **you** neither deserved or earned**, why do you boast as if it weren't** (see the commentary on **First Corinthians Ax – A Faulty View of the God's Gifts**)**?** None of us can truly claim to be rendering to **God** a true profit on His investment in us; the truth is that all that our **Lord** may gain through our work is merely the fruit of **His** own gifting and labor, coupled with many failures and **sins** for **Him** to forgive.

Second, a truly significant offering to God usually requires much preparation and effort. When **Hannah** brought **Samuel** to live with **'Eli** in **Shiloh** (see **Ae – The Tabernacle at Shiloh**), **she** had invested a great deal of effort in **the boy**. **She** did not bring him until he would be able to stay without being a burden to **the high priest**. **She** said **to her husband, "As soon as the child has been weaned, then I will bring him, so that he can appear before ADONAI and live there forever" (First Samuel 1:22). According to Second Maccabees 7:27, Jewish children were breast-fed for three or four years.** It is hard to imagine how **Hannah** could have safely left **Samuel** until **he** was no longer a toddler, which means that **she** carefully prepared **him** during the vital first few years for the vow **she** had made.

The need for preparation extends to all kinds of offerings we make to **God**. If a person believes they are called into the ministry, years of training are not a pointless hindrance, but a vital time of preparation. Those devoting themselves to long-term missionary service need to gain the proper skills, learn languages, and raise financial support. The preparation is an essential part of the service they offer. Likewise, believers desiring to be faithful in tithing will often need to prepare by removing debts and simplifying their lifestyle. This only makes the offering to

ADONAI more valuable and precious to **Him**. In fact, a good deal of any meaningful offering to **YHVH** will consist of preparing to give: undertaking evangelism training so as to be able to communicate the gospel effectively; biblical study to be effective parents; even the organization and forethought that is essential to any fruitful ministry of intercessory prayer. Mature and serious believers, like **Hannah**, realize that few things of real value can be offered to **God** without extensive preparation and effort.

Third, it is absolutely essential that believers realize that any offering we make to God can be brought only on the basis of His mercy and grace. This was the purpose for at least one of **the bulls Hannah brought**; to offer a **blood** sacrifice for the **sins** of **her** and **Samuel**. First, **they slaughtered the bull** and then **they brought the child to 'Eli (First Samuel 1:25).** Since they remembered that even to approach **YHVH** required a **purification** of their **sins**; how much more would be required for whatever service **they** offered **Him**? However we may praise **Hannah's** offering of **Samuel**, **she** knew that even **her** best motives required **purifying** through atoning **blood,** as did **the son she** was offering **the LORD**.[46]

The Scottish Presbyterian minister William Blaikie (1820 to 1899), in his commentary on **First Samuel**, advises all who come with an offering to **God** to "remember how unworthy you are to stand before **Him**. Remember how stained your garments are with **sin** and worldliness, how distracted your heart is with other thoughts and feelings, how poor the service is you are capable of rendering." How then can we ever give to **the Lord**? The answer is found in the **purifying blood** of **Messiah**. Blaikie says, "When you give yourselves to **Him**, or ask to be allowed to take your place among **His** servants, seek as you do so to be sprinkled with **the blood** of **purification**.[47]

The Good News is that not only must we come to **ADONAI** through the atoning **blood** of **Messiah**, but however bad we are (or have been), believers are *always accepted* by **YHVH** through **the blood**. While it is necessary that we come to **Ha'Shem** by **Messiah's blood**, it is also certain that we will be received by **Messiah's** grace. The apostle **John** stated that **the blood of His Son Yeshua purifies us from all sin (First John 1:7).** Therefore, when we come to **the LORD**, presenting our gifts for **His** service, we come only through the merit and **blood** of our **Savior**, **Yeshua Messiah**, and we come *certain* of **God's** acceptance, favor, and spiritual enabling. As **Paul** put it, **Messiah** has even accepted **sinners** like us to be adopted into **His** eternal family, to participate in the work of **His** glorious

Kingdom, and **to share in the inheritance of His people in the light (Colossians 1:12).**[48]