

LENT TO THE LORD

By Keith Greer

"For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore I also have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the LORD." So they worshiped the LORD there." (1 Samuel 1:27-28)

Hannah desperately desired to have a son. In her prayer unto the Lord she made a solemn vow, " Then she made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head." (1 Samuel 1:11) Hannah had decided this was a small price for the blessing of a son. As we read this account in 1 Samuel, we understand Samuel's life was given to the Lord.

As I read this story, my thoughts went back to the birth of my children. God blessed me with three daughters and one son. My first feeling was that of sheer jubilation, until on my way back home, it hit me, "Keith, you're a father." God had given me a soul to mold after His will. What an awesome responsibility God has required of me!

The birth of our children is certainly an exhilarating experience. After accepting everyone's congratulations, reality needs to set in. Along with this wonderful blessing, comes a grave and serious challenge; guiding our children down the "straight and narrow pathway" of life!

In Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus he states this in no uncertain terms, "And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4)

God did not give this charge to anyone except the parents. Since we brought them into this world, God saw fit to give us the job. Yet, how many parents accept this duty willingly?

All we hear in the news is the need for more daycare centers for our children and more classes to teach our children about sexual education. One of our past first ladies wrote a book suggesting "it takes a village to raise a child." We can pass out condoms, and put our daughters on birth control pills, but we fight to keep prayer out of schools! I believe we need to remember what our country was founded upon: In God We Trust!

We need parents to take hold of our God-given responsibility! Let society pass the buck and let the world go along with them. Do we need to jump on the "bandwagon" with them? Christian parents need to stand up and be counted to set the example for others and not get caught playing "follow the leader."

Let me ask each of you parents who are Christians – what is your most important concern about our children? To have a wonderful childhood filled with many precious memories? Making sure they have more than you had as a child? Allowing them to excel in sports as a means of garnering a secular education on a scholarship? Do we try to be their "friend" instead of being their

parent? Listen very carefully, nothing in this list, and many other things I could add , are not wrong. Yet, if any of them is gained at the expense of their spiritual training you will reap more heartaches instead of joy. Why? The most important thing they possess – a living soul – will be lost forever. No pain on earth will ever be so deep to bear than the reality our children are going down the path that leads to eternal destruction!

We are not much different than Hannah. God has granted "our petition" with the gift of our children. Can we do less than Hannah promised to do? What if we as parents don't fulfill our God given duties toward our children – who will? Brethren, God is depending on us to "shine forth as lights in a world of darkness." The clock of their lives are ticking – what lessons are we teaching them? ***