



CELL

REFLECTIONS

These Cell Outlines are written by Youth and Children's Ministries. They are available every month from our website. For more information and other Cell resources, visit [salvationarmy.org.uk/children-and-youth-resources](https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/children-and-youth-resources)

INTRODUCTION

Throughout July we explored the theme of waiting and encountered people in the Bible who faced the challenge of waiting on God.

We spent time with Daniel, taken from his homeland and led into exile. As he waited for God to answer his prayer to rescue his people, Daniel continued to trust in God's faithfulness.

In a society where a woman's value was found in her ability to bear children, Hannah was isolated and alone. Mocked by those around her, she cried out to God to give her a child and repeatedly asked God to answer her prayer. She was weighed down by the expectations of others – but God was with her.

David had the world at his feet. Chosen and anointed as the next king of Israel, all he had to do was serve King Saul, wait it out, and eventually take his place on the throne. But jealousy possessed King Saul and David ran for his life. All his safety nets were taken away and he found himself waiting in the wilderness.

The young John Mark knew he came from a privileged background, but he put aside his life of luxury to serve God. Despite his initial enthusiasm, John Mark struggled to deal with the challenges of mission life. Unable to handle the pressure, John Mark left Paul and Barnabas high and dry. Would Paul ever forgive him? How did he come back from that to become the author of one of the Gospels?

Over the next four weeks, we will revisit these stories and learn from those who waited well ... or not so well in some cases. Whatever you are waiting for, God is in this situation with you. We pray that these reflections will help you to discover more about God's faithfulness and reassure you that you are not alone in the waiting.

God is with you and 'from the moment you decided to humble yourself to receive understanding, your prayer was heard.' (Daniel 10:12 *The Message*)

WAITING FOR GOD TO MAKE A MOVE!

From his earliest days in Babylon, Daniel made a clear decision about the kind of waiting he was willing to commit to. There would be no compromising or adjusting his faith to suit his surroundings. He wasn't interested in diluting his beliefs to accommodate the world around him. He loved God, served God and was determined to remain faithful to God.

We often commend Daniel for this, championing his bravery as he faced adversity.

He's seen as a fearless God-follower daring to remain faithful in a world that was faithless.

You may have sung the well-known words of Daniel's song:

SASB 521

**Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone,
Dare to have a purpose firm,
And dare to make it known.**

— (PHILIP PAUL BLISS)

I don't really see Daniel this way.

I think if we had the chance to catch up with Daniel today, he'd say he didn't see it as bravery. He certainly wouldn't see himself as daring. For him, it would have been more brave to recklessly trust the things of earth to get him through. It would have been more courageous to hope that the numerous kings he served would do the right thing and that his colleagues would stick by him during times of trouble.

Daniel waited on God because he was the only one in the situation that was worth waiting for. Even in the waiting, Daniel knew that God was working to answer his prayers.

As Daniel waited for the revelation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, God was there (Daniel 2).

As Daniel waited for evil rulers to face justice, God was there (Daniel 5).

As Daniel waited in the lions' den, God was there (Daniel 6).

As Daniel waited in desperation for the chance for his people to return home, God was there (Daniel 9).

It was an angel that came to Daniel and told him what he knew deep down all along.

'From the moment you decided to humble yourself to receive understanding, your prayer was heard, and I set out to come to you.'

— (DANIEL 10:12 THE MESSAGE)

Whatever you're praying for, God hears you.

Whatever you're waiting for, he knows, he is listening and has already put into motion a way to answer your prayer.

READ

**God proves to be good to the man who passionately waits,
to the woman who diligently seeks.
It's a good thing to quietly hope,
quietly hope for help from God.
It's a good thing when you're young
to stick it out through the hard times.**

— LAMENTATIONS 3:25-27 (THE MESSAGE)

REST

Daniel knew how to be honest with God about his feelings and frustrations.

Spend some time in prayer and reflection.

Move away all the distractions and rest in God, safe in the knowledge that he listens to every word you pray.



'Hello Lord' – Sara Groves

www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEnUEXyqwTk

REFLECT

“ Biblically, waiting is not just something we have to do until we get what we want. Waiting is part of the process of becoming what God wants us to be.”

— JOHN ORTBERG

- * What do you find challenging when you are waiting on God?
- * Do you sometimes get frustrated with the idea of waiting on God as being a 'character building' exercise? Explain why / why not.
- * As you have reflected on Daniel's story, what have you learned about waiting on God?
- * How can Daniel's experience help you in your own faith journey?

REACT

What are you waiting for?

As you reflect on Daniel's example, what action could you take to 'wait well' during this season?

MAKE A NOTE



A large, empty rectangular box with a gray border, intended for taking notes.

WAITING FOR AN ANSWER

Surrounded by people, Hannah felt alone.

In a society where childbearing was highly valued, she was childless. The weight of expectation lay heavy on her heart and she was mocked and judged by those who couldn't relate to, or understand, her situation. Adding to her isolation, her own husband clumsily asked, 'Aren't I enough for you?'

I think he may have missed the point!

- * Why wouldn't God answer this prayer?
- * Why couldn't Hannah have what so many around her had?
- * Why did it have to be so difficult?

Can you relate to any of these questions?

It's hard when we're waiting for God to answer a prayer, especially when we can't see any good reason why it hasn't been answered. Hannah was married, lived in a safe family home, loved God, would love her child with everything she had, and yet the answer to the prayer appeared to be 'no'.

As Hannah waited, she kept pouring her heart out to God. On one occasion she prayed so desperately that Eli the priest thought she had been drinking. When he discovered the reason for her tears he said, 'Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him' (1 Samuel 1:17).

We get to read the happy ending to the story, but as Hannah prayed she had no idea whether God would say yes, no, or maybe! In the waiting she kept bringing her heart to God without knowing which way it would go. As the people around her mocked and misunderstood her, God knew Hannah's needs and was there to meet them even while she was waiting.

Hannah lived in a specific time and place in history. The social pressures she faced were linked to issues that may seem of little relevance today, but the emotions attached to them are the same.

- * We all feel the weight of expectation from others.
- * We all long for something we see others enjoying.
- * We all wonder whether God will answer our prayers.

Hannah teaches us that as we keep bringing our heart to God, he is there with us in the waiting.

READ

 Read Psalm 13.

Explore different translations and consider their choice of words as they express the frustration of waiting on God.

Which translation do you relate to the most? Why is that?

'But I have trusted and relied on and been confident in Your lovingkindness and faithfulness; My heart shall rejoice and delight in your salvation.'

— PSALM 13:5 AMP

REST

Hannah brought her broken heart to the Lord and left, still waiting, but at peace.

Spend some time in prayer and reflection.

Move away all the distractions and rest in God, safe in the knowledge that he listens to every word you pray.

 **'Psalm 13' (Live), The Worship Initiative ft. Hannah Hardin and Bethany Barnard**
www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNGy2ZrZPxA

REFLECT

The answer came and it was yes. Hannah was filled with joy and did something many of us forget to do. She stopped, gave thanks and gave all the glory to God for her answered prayer.

Read Hannah's prayer of praise and thanksgiving found in 1 Samuel 2:1-10.

What does it teach you about God's nature?

REACT

- * How has God been faithful to you in the past?
- * Did you rush on to the next prayer request or did you take time to give thanks?
- * As you reflect on Hannah's experience of waiting and the joy she felt when her prayer was answered, write your own prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

MAKE A NOTE



A large, empty rectangular box with a gray border, intended for taking notes.

WAITING FOR THINGS TO GET BETTER

Everything was going well for David. Chosen as God's anointed heir to the throne, he knew his destiny was to become the new king. He was welcomed into King Saul's court and immediately began to see success on the battlefield. David thought he knew the plan – and then everything was in disarray. King Saul's praise turned to jealousy and David was forced to run for his life. Alone and in exile, David contemplated all that had happened.

**Be good to me, God – and now!
I've run to you for dear life.
I'm hiding out under your wings
until the hurricane blows over.
I call out to High God,
the God who holds me together.
He sends orders from heaven and saves me,
he humiliates those who kick me around.
God delivers generous love,
he makes good on his word.**

— PSALM 57:1-3 THE MESSAGE

- * Have you ever felt like David?
- * Have you ever felt like you knew what was ahead and then plans suddenly changed?
- * Where did/do you see God's hand in this situation?

While hiding deep in a cave, David had the perfect opportunity to take matters into his own hands and seek his revenge. Without knowing David's men were hidden in the darkness, King Saul entered the cave to relieve himself! That's about as vulnerable as you can get.

Would David seize his moment and claim victory?

To the disappointment of his soldiers, David simply took a corner of King Saul's robe as proof that he was a loyal subject of the king. David knew that killing King Saul was not part of the plan, and even though it would have brought his immediate suffering to an end, he was unwilling to step out of God's will for his life.

- * When you are waiting for things to get better, are you ever tempted to micromanage the situation and take matters into your own hands? What does that look like for you?
- * Why is it so difficult to trust God when we are waiting for things to get better?
- * What do we learn from David's example?

READ

Heavenly Father,

It's so tempting sometimes to bypass your will and take my own route. Help me to resist that temptation. If plans take a different turn and life becomes difficult to navigate, help me to trust in you and remain faithful to your purpose for my life. No matter what happens I know that you are with me and, just like David, you will remain faithful as I wait for my situation to improve.

Thank you that you are in each and every situation I face.

I love you.

Amen.

REST

David had to dig deep to trust in God's plan for his life. Nothing was going as he expected and yet God was there with David in the cave. Reflect on the words of 'Trust in You' and recommit to trust in God while you wait for things to get better.

When you don't move the mountains

I'm needing you to move

When you don't part the waters

I wish I could walk through

When you don't give the answers

As I cry out to you

I will trust, I will trust

I will trust in you

Truth is, you know what tomorrow brings

There's not a day ahead you have not seen

So in all things be my life and breath

I want what you want, Lord, and nothing less

— (LAUREN DAIGLE/MICHAEL FARREN/PAUL MARBURY)

▶ Lauren Daigle – 'Trust in You' (Starstruck Sessions)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LGql4nazkk>

REFLECT

“ I hope some day that God can explain some of the delays to us ... but I'm convinced that one of the things he is teaching me, and all of us, is perseverance. In this day and age of everything being 'instant' – we can forget what it means to persevere. Perseverance is one of the ways of God that are found all through the word. It's an important character trait for us to have in our walk with the Lord. Being willing to persevere in prayer, and in other ways, is often a test for us.”

— SALLY MCCLUNG

- * What delays would you like God to explain to you?
- * Do you think we are good at waiting for things these days? If not, why not?
- * As infuriating as it can be to hear that waiting builds perseverance, has it been true in your experience?

REACT

- * If you are in the middle of waiting for a situation to get better, then take a moment to reflect on all that has happened or could happen. David resisted the temptation to take matters into his own hands and micromanage God's plan for his life.
- * If you're honest with yourself, is there any micromanaging going on in your life right now?
- * Spend time in prayer and acknowledge the areas where you have tried to take over God's place in your life and place your trust back in the hands of the one who holds your future.

MAKE A NOTE



A large, empty rectangular box with a gray border, intended for taking notes.

WAITING FOR THINGS TO WORK OUT

I should have been a physiotherapist!

My place was secured at the University of East London and I was ready to go ... and then results day arrived. Needless to say, I am not, and never have been, a physiotherapist. At the time I was devastated. I was absolutely convinced that I had ruined God's plan for my life simply because A-Level Psychology wasn't anywhere near as interesting as they said it would be. Plans changed, my pride was damaged and my future looked very different from how I thought it would look. And so the pattern continued of life twisting and turning in directions I didn't expect, sometimes of my own making and others times not so much.

This is why I love John Mark, our character for this week.

He had such good intentions, studied hard, was committed to following God into the most perilous of circumstances; and then something – we never find out exactly what – went wrong.

From Paphos, Paul and company put out to sea, sailing on to Perga in Pamphylia. That's where John called it quits and went back to Jerusalem. From Perga the rest of them travelled on to Antioch in Pisidia.

— ACT 13:13-14 THE MESSAGE

For whatever reason, John Mark was no longer able to continue on the path he thought God had set before him. We don't know if he was homesick, afraid of the persecution he would face, or had a bout of anxiety that made him change direction and return home. We do know that it took a while for the rift between John and the Apostle Paul to heal.

Barnabas wanted to take John along, the John nicknamed Mark. But Paul wouldn't have him; he wasn't about to take along a quitter who, as soon as the going got tough, had jumped ship on them in Pamphylia. Tempers flared, and they ended up going their separate ways: Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus; Paul chose Silas and, offered up by their friends to the grace of the Master, went to Syria and Cilicia to put grit in those congregations.

— ACTS 15:37-41 THE MESSAGE

He wasn't about to take along a quitter ... ouch!

When things don't work out the way we expected, we not only have to deal with our own disappointment, but also the expectations of others. John Mark's life took a different turn and it was hard for him to come back from that. As he waited for things to work out, God had work to do in his heart. Broken relationships had to be healed and John Mark had to find his way again.

The good news is that he did!

John Mark let God work through his mistakes and mishaps and helped him to become a mature, faith-filled Christian. He even managed to win over the Apostle Paul who wrote in his letter to Timothy: 'Bring Mark with you; he'll be my right-hand man' (2 Timothy 4:11 *The Message*).

From 'quitter' to 'right-hand man' – that's the work that God can do while we are waiting for things to work out.

READ

“‘Waiting is difficult. It requires an attitude of humility and hope that few of us come by naturally. And so we must cultivate that perspective. If we are going to learn to wait, then we must ... wait.’

— BEN PATTERSON

Is it possible to learn to wait well without ever having to wait?

What valuable lesson do we learn from John Mark about waiting?

REST

John Mark lost his way on a number of occasions. While John Mark was waiting for things to work, God patiently waited and worked in his life. Rest in the words of Travis Green's song 'You Waited':

 **Travis Greene, 'You Waited'**

www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnN9Zz6BBzs

REFLECT

In the session linked to this reflection, we spent time exploring John Mark's story. The clip is worth another watch and reminds us that God works in the twists and turns of our lives. Just as he did with John Mark, God is waiting with you as you wait for things to work out.

 **Acts Episode 6 John Mark – Eyewitness Bible Series**

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zdi6ipT1Ho

REACT

Throughout this series we have considered what it means to 'wait well'. Waiting is an active process and I'll leave you with this challenging quote from Francis Chan:

“‘Most of us use “I'm waiting for God to reveal his calling on my life” as a means of avoiding action. Did you hear God calling you to sit in front of the television yesterday? Or to go on your last vacation? Or exercise this morning? Probably not, but you still did it. The point isn't that vacations or exercise are wrong, but that we are quick to rationalise our entertainment and priorities yet are slow to commit to serving God.’

— FRANCIS CHAN

So, what are you waiting for?

MAKE A NOTE



A large, empty rectangular box with a gray border, intended for writing a note.