



GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Winter Quarter - Lesson 7 - Week of February 26, 2023

Lesson: ANNA: THE FAITHFUL WITNESS

Bible Verses: Luke 2:36-38; Hebrews 11:1; Matthew 27:55; John 19:25;
Philippians 4:2-3; Colossians 4:15; Romans 16:6; Luke 8:1-3

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

- Would you rather have a fast forward, pause or rewind button on your life?
- What is a quirky or unusual fear that you have?

DISCUSSION

Anna was a widow. Having lost her husband after only seven years of marriage, this woman knew sorrow. Think about it. She would likely have been in her early twenties at this point. What options did she have? Apparently, she allowed her suffering to soften her fiber and strengthen her faith. When you experience sorrow and pain, how do you remain faithful to the Lord?

After losing her husband, Anna could have become bitter. Instead, she became better and blessed. Rather than simply becoming old and fatigued, she kept such a high degree of vitality and spirituality that she was chosen of all women to be the prophetess who recognized Jesus as the Messiah (Luke 2:38). Why? Anna spent her long life in faithful service to the Lord night and day. Even in her senior years, at the age of 84, she still looked for the deliverance of Jerusalem, for the Messiah, for the Savior - for Jesus!

Anna prayed to the Lord. She didn't give herself to bemoaning her loss. Rather, she used being single as an opportunity to give herself to God completely and wholeheartedly. What application can you find from Anna's story?

Anna looked for the Lord. Like Simeon, she lived in anticipation of the coming of the Messiah. Anna talked about the Lord to all who looked for redemption. So, if we are true worshippers, we cannot help but witness and talk to people about the Lord.

The life of Anna offers us two important lessons. First, we see the fruit of long-term faith; faith that is the substance of things hoped for (Hebrews 11:1). Is your faith ever burning? Second, we learn about encouraging one another. Anna's joyous outpouring of faith must have sunk deeply into Mary's confused soul after Simeon prophesied that she would encounter sorrow (Luke 2:34-35).

Anna's words of encouragement were a balm of refreshment to Mary's bruised spirit. Lift up and encourage someone who is cast down today.

Women have always played a significant role in the growth of the church; even being among the few who witnessed the crucifixion of Christ (Matthew 27:55; John 19:25). The apostle Paul held women in high regard; and in many of his letters, he spoke of their value (Romans 16:6,12; Colossians 4:15; Philippians 4:2-3). Paul addresses these women as co-workers, and they clearly served the Lord to the benefit of the whole church (Philippians 4:3; Colossians 4:15). The modern-day church must find ways to utilize women in ministry without violating scripture.

When our Lord Jesus walked this earth, certain women enjoyed a role in ministry (Luke 8:1-3). We recognize the value of this special role of women in Jesus' ministry. The Greek word used here for serving appears in four Gospels only when the ministry or service is being rendered directly to Jesus. In those cases, it is administered by either angels or women.

1. Luke 2:37 reveals that Anna never left the temple. What does that tell us about Anna?
2. What do we learn about worship from Anna's story?

Anna served God by offering Him her praise and service. Men and women can praise and serve God. Remember, God delights in using people who the world thinks are nobodies. Also, age is of no consequence to God. Anna was senior in age and God still used her for His good.

Prayer Focus: God, help me find my space in the church and serve until I die.