

“Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the Lord’s house. In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly.” 1 Samuel 1:9-10 NIV

## lectio // 1 Samuel 1:1-18

You are going to think I’m crazy when you read this! There are two words that jump out at me every time I read this story. Those two words: “his chair.” What’s the big deal? Well I searched and searched for all the furniture that is a part of the temple and it’s association of meaning behind each piece. What I do not find is a CHAIR. Yet, we find Eli sitting in one on the day that Hannah pays a visit to the temple, and it’s followed by how completely distraught she was. And that makes this chair even more egregious! There are no chairs in the temple because there’s no reason to be sitting. If you’re a priest you are **STANDING**, attentive, serving God and the people. If you’re a person coming to meet with God your standing, kneeling or laying flat - all postures of being with a holy God. His chair? Eli had this made for him. And we not only find him sitting in it, we find him sideline-judging people as he watched them in their conversations with God. He got this one really wrong, thinking she was drunk. Had he not seen anyone crying before God? Had he not seen someone broken and contrite with sin or suffering **IN** the house of God? Apparently not. And to make things extra creepy, it is recorded that Eli actually died **IN A CHAIR**, when news came that his evil sons were dead and the shocking news of the Ark being taken, caused him to reel back in his chair and his overweight body snapped his own neck! 1 Samuel 14: 13, 18. “When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward off his chair by the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died, for he was an old man, and he was heavy...” Chairs and too much fat offerings - these are reminders and warnings to me if I get too comfortable full time ministry!

## oratio

Dad,

I just want to live my life in service to you and to the Kingdom of God! I don’t want to be entitled, lazy or fat off the generosity of your people. I’ve seen what this “Eli” style of ministry does to my friends and the church and I just don’t want that to be my legacy. Please help me stay focused, sharp, open to your spirit and humble as I “get” to lead.

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root