

Baby Routine / Depending on God

Claire: I'm a new mother with my first baby – a little girl, Lucy. She's nearly 5 months old. I *love* looking after her. She smiles when I make noises with my mouth, or sing a song to her. She laughs at her brightly coloured toys. I love watching her learn new things...

Tammy: Welcome. We are together again on Women of Hope, I'm Tammy. And the new mom you just heard is Claire. Welcome Claire...and little Lucy.

Claire: Thank you.

Carol: And I'm Carol - I'm here too of course. And even though It has been a long time since I had a new baby, I can clearly remember enjoying my first baby as well. What new things have you enjoyed watching Lucy do?

Claire: When she learned to roll over...and the first time she carefully picked up a toy with those tiny fingers.

Tammy: And I remember how it felt to cuddle my new baby.

Claire: Oh yes...I love cuddling my baby and giving her lots of kisses, and I especially love having her soft cheek against my face. When she had just learnt to roll over from her back to her tummy, she did it when I put her down in her cot to go to sleep. At first I was worried that she would sleep with her face in the mattress, but she was strong enough to hold her head up and move it so she could breathe.

Carol: Did you talk to your baby health nurse about it?

Claire: I did. She said it's important for young babies to sleep on their back. This is the safest position for healthy babies. Babies are more likely to die of SIDS if they sleep on their sides or tummies.

Carol: SIDS stands for 'sudden infant death syndrome'!

Claire: Yes it does...and she said that by the time babies can roll onto their tummies, most of the risk of SIDS will have passed. If you're worried about your baby choking on vomit, it might help to know that healthy babies put to sleep on their backs are less likely to choke on vomit than babies put to sleep on their tummies. Once your baby can roll over (at 4-6 months), continue putting him to sleep on his back, but allow him to find his own sleeping position.

Tammy: And I heard a baby health nurse saying that if the baby sleeps in a cot it's also important to put him low down in the cot so his feet are near the bottom end and he can't wriggle down and get under the covers. And we should tuck the covers firmly around him.

Carol: On Women of Hope today, Claire is telling us about her beautiful little baby, Lucy. Lucy is 5 months old. So Claire did you breast feed your baby?

Claire: Oh yes. Once Lucy learnt to attach to my breast properly in the first week, we started to enjoy these special times together. Usually she would stay awake for a few minutes after her feed, while I changed her nappy and clothes, then she would go back to sleep again. Newborn babies seem to sleep so much.

Tammy: Babies are growing while they're sleeping, that's why they sleep so much!

Claire: Yes. I made sure that Lucy had six feeds within a 24 hour period, to make sure she was having enough to drink to help her put on weight and grow. Lucy was a sleepy baby to begin with, so if she was not completely awake when I was breast feeding her, she would fall asleep and not drink enough. If she didn't drink enough, she would wake up during her next sleep because she was hungry.

So I learnt that if I kept her awake to drink until she was full, she seemed to sleep for longer. I also learnt to be patient with her and give her enough time to drink until she was full. I think this helped her feel content and sleep well.

Carol: A lot of babies cry a lot in their first few weeks? Did Lucy?

Claire: She sometimes cried...so when I put her down in her cradle to go to sleep, I made sure that she had a clean nappy, she wasn't hot or cold, and was full of breast milk. That way, if she didn't go to sleep and was crying, I knew there was another reason. It wasn't because she had a dirty nappy, or was hungry, or hot or cold.

Often she had trouble going to sleep because she had pain from gas in her stomach, This was just because of her immature digestive system or because she had taken in too much air and she had wind pains. My husband, or I, would pick her up and lean her over our shoulder. This would usually help her burp. If this didn't work, we would sit down and lay her across our knees and gently pat her on the back. Once the wind was gone she would go to sleep easily.

Sometimes she would cry a little bit before going to sleep even when there was nothing wrong. But I soon learnt that even if she was crying, she was able to go to sleep without needing our help.

Tammy: How did you learn that?

Claire: I learnt this by accident! One day when I was wrapping her up in her cotton wrap to put her in her cradle, there was a knock at the door. Lucy was crying but I wasn't sure why. So I quickly finished wrapping her and put her in her cradle. I ran downstairs to see who was at the door. I was worried that Lucy would keep crying and that I'd need to go back and help her go to sleep. But the conversation with my visitor went longer than I thought, and after about 10 minutes I couldn't hear Lucy crying anymore. Once my visitor left, I went to check on her, and there she was, fast asleep. She had gone to sleep all on her own without needing me to rock her in my arms.

Tammy: That was a good lesson for you to learn wasn't it! Having your first baby is not easy. It's hard to find time to get other things done – like the cleaning and washing, and cooking meals. Tell us how you managed all those things?

Claire: It was hard for the first few months, as I didn't have a routine in my day. I just fed Lucy when she seemed hungry, and put her to sleep when she seemed tired. I wasn't worried that each day was a bit different. Then I began to keep a record of what time she was hungry and for how long she would drink. This is how I worked out she was getting hungry about every three or four hours and at a similar time each day. So I decided to try setting a routine. After reading a few books and talking to my friends who also had babies, I decided to give Lucy her first breast feed at 7am and make her bedtime 7pm.

No matter what time she woke up in the night to have some breast milk, I would always wake her at 7am and feed her again. Even when Lucy was waking up at about 5.30am, I would feed her, put her back to sleep, then wake her again at 7am and give her more breast milk. That way she would always start her day at the same time and with a full tummy. And since she seemed to go for four hours in between feeds, my day was more predictable and I could get other things done. I knew she would want another feed at around 11am and 3pm.

Carol: Routines are important for babies. Did you always stick to this routine?

Claire: Mostly, but some days she wanted to feed earlier or later, and especially on hot days she wanted breast milk more frequently. In the evenings, she always seemed to get hungrier quicker. So often I gave her an extra feed at about 5:30pm, then again at 6.30pm before putting her down to sleep at 7pm. I've been told that the quality of breast milk is not as good in the evenings, perhaps because the mother has had a full day of being busy and is tired. So perhaps that's why Lucy got hungry more quickly in the evenings. So to make sure she was still having enough breast milk in 24 hours, and to help her sleep through the night, I would give her some more milk later in the evening, about 10:30. But this time I would feed her while she was still sleeping. Babies are so clever that they can suck milk from the breast even while they're sleeping!

Tammy: Today on Women of Hope, Claire is visiting us with her little baby Lucy. Claire, do you think all new mothers should try to have the same routine?

Claire: Everyone's different. A friend of mine has a baby the same age as Lucy. Her baby has a different routine...she seems to get hungrier more quickly and wants to have breast milk more often. It doesn't matter what routine your baby is in, what matters is that it works for you and your family and that your baby gets enough milk throughout the day.

Tammy: So let's remember what helped Lucy get into a routine:

Making sure at each feed, she drank until she was full...

Claire: Yes, and letting her fall asleep in her cradle without our help.

If Lucy woke up during sleep time and I knew she wasn't hungry, I would not get her up but try to help her go back to sleep.

Carol: And you chose a wake up time...and a bed time...

Claire: And I tried to be consistent with these every day. But it's important for me to be patient and not worry. If Lucy doesn't stick to her usual routine I just say to myself – 'we'll start again tomorrow'.

Carol: That sounds sensible. Now Claire is going to share something from God's word, the Bible. She is a Bible study teacher – but she has stopped teaching at the moment to take care of little Lucy.

Claire: God made the universe and he made you. He loves you and wants to take care of you just like you want to take care of your baby if you're a mother. Zephaniah was a prophet who lived about 600 years before Jesus was born. He was inspired by God to write this: *"the Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."* (Zeph ch3 v17)

What beautiful words. Think about how you take great delight in staring into your baby's eyes, you quieten her by loving and cuddling her, you rejoice over her as you sing and talk with her. This is how God feels about you.

I've learnt a bit about how we can depend on God, just like Lucy depends on me, through a woman in the Bible called Hannah. Now you might know that Women of Hope is part of a service to women, called *Project Hannah*. Many women use the Project Hannah prayer calendar to pray for other women around the world. This is the woman Project Hannah is named after. She was married to a man called Elkanah and I want to tell you part of her story. It comes from 1 Samuel, in the Bible. Would you read it please, Ros?

Ros: Sure.

Ros: Hannah could not have children, and it was getting her down. Elkanah her husband would say to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted?"

Once when they were at the temple in Shiloh and they had finished eating and drinking, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair in the doorway of the Lord's temple. Hannah's heart was bitter and she wept a lot as she prayed to the Lord. She made a promise to God... "Lord Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life..."

As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli watched her mouth. Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but he could not hear her voice. Eli thought she was drunk and said to her, "How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine."

"Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great sorrow and grief."

Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him."

She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer sad.

Early the next morning she and Elkanah got up and worshiped the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. So Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, which means 'God hears'.

Claire: What a wonderful story. What do we learn about Hannah in this story?

Tammy: I noticed that Hannah's attitude changed after she prayed to God.

Claire: Yes, she told God her deepest sorrow and grief and after that she was not sad anymore. Just talking to God and leaving her sorrow with him changed how she saw her situation...

Carol: ...and that was even before he answered her specific prayer and gave her the precious baby boy that she asked him for!

Claire: This story reminds me of something else written in the Bible many years later. One of Jesus' followers, Peter said, *Give all your worries and cares to God because he cares about you.*" (1 Peter 5:7 NLT) That's exactly what Hannah did – she gave her worries to God, knowing that he cared for her.

Perhaps there's something bothering you at the moment, something that's making you worry a lot. Why don't you come to God and ask him to comfort you? He wants to comfort you - it's as though he could pick you up and wrap his arms around you and whisper in your ear that he loves you, and that he understands what you're going through. Just the way you might pick up a young crying child to comfort them with a big hug and tell them it's all right – that's how God wants to support you if you only ask him.

God is so loving...he wants us to depend on him for everything. When Jesus was teaching some people how to pray to God, he said this prayer: *"Our Father in heaven, may your name be honoured. May your kingdom come soon. May your will be done here on earth, just as it is in heaven. Give us our food for today, and forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. And don't let us give in to temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."* (Matthew 6:9-13)

We can depend on God for what we need...from providing food, to helping us forgive people who have hurt us, and asking God to protect us.

Carol: The Bible tells us that one of the names for God is our *Provider*. He provides what we need and we can depend on him just as Hannah did.

Claire: Yes...before you even ask, God knows exactly *what* you need and *when* you need it. It's like me knowing that my daughter needs breast milk every four hours, and lots of sleep. So. will you ask God for what you need?

Carol: Perhaps you're worried about having enough food for your family, or maybe you have had an argument with a close friend that has upset you. ...Or you might be anxious about your children making friends? Or whether you'll be able to find a job? No matter how big or small your problem is, you can always depend on God.

Tammy: Let's pray to him now. You can join me if you like...

Father God, thank you for being the one who provides what we need. Thank you for answering Hannah's prayer. You know what I need, and I trust you to provide for me too. I know I can depend on you. We pray this in the name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen

Carol: We will have to go now, but we'll be back again soon. We do hope you will be with us again. Have a great week filled with God's blessings.

Claire: God bless you as you learn to trust him for everything you need. Goodbye.

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