

# 21. NEEDED

**NOW THERE WAS A MAN IN JERUSALEM WHOSE NAME WAS SIMEON; THIS MAN WAS RIGHTEOUS AND DEVOUT, LOOKING FORWARD TO THE CONSOLATION OF ISRAEL, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT RESTED ON HIM.... THERE WAS ALSO A PROPHET, ANNA THE DAUGHTER OF PHANUEL, OF THE TRIBE OF ASHER. SHE WAS OF A GREAT AGE.... SHE NEVER LEFT THE TEMPLE BUT WORSHIPED THERE WITH FASTING AND PRAYER NIGHT AND DAY. AT THAT MOMENT SHE CAME AND BEGAN TO PRAISE GOD AND TO SPEAK ABOUT THE CHILD TO ALL WHO WERE LOOKING FOR THE REDEMPTION OF JERUSALEM.**

**LUKE 2:21-38**

## The Callings of Elders

In this story, Elders are celebrated for their unique perspective on life. They matter, they have purpose, they are called, they are needed.

Just like in this Scripture passage, these two aging prophets, Simeon and Anna, exemplify the way elders are called to live ever more radically, living out their deepest values. Under Roman occupation in the first century, Simeon is “looking for the consolation of Israel” and Anna is “looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.” To do so, they stay close to the Temple, in fasting and prayer. They are praying there when Mary and Joseph enter to make an offering to God, just after Jesus’s birth.

Both elders offer a blessing for the baby, already recognizing God’s call upon the newborn Jesus. Our society often portrays elders as primarily looking back at the past, but these two are looking eagerly forward. And they know they are needed.

God’s call makes us needed ones. No matter how much of life we’ve already experienced.

In God’s world, we are called and needed from birth to death.

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## Exploration Questions

- Why do you think Elders are important to God?
- How do you nurture hopefulness in your life—is it easy or hard for you?
- What values do you hope will guide your own late adulthood?
- What do you have to give others now that you didn’t have before, when you were younger?
- What risks can you afford to take now, on behalf of God’s Kingdom, that you could not afford before?