

## A reading from the Second Book of Samuel

David therefore besought God for the child;  
and David fasted,  
and went in and lay all night upon the ground.  
And the elders of his house stood beside him,  
to raise him from the ground;  
but he would not, nor did he eat food with them.

On the seventh day the child died.

And the servants of David feared to tell him  
that the child was dead;

for they said,

“Behold, while the child was yet alive,  
we spoke to him and he did not listen to us;  
how then can we say to him the child is dead?

He may do himself some harm.”

But when David saw that his servants were whispering,

David perceived that the child was dead;

and David said to his servants,

“Is the child dead?”

They said, “He is dead.”

Then David arose from the earth and washed  
and anointed himself,

and changed his clothes,  
and he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped;  
he then went to his own house;  
and when he asked,  
they set food before him and he ate.

Then his servants said to him,  
“What is this thing that you have done?  
You have fasted and wept for the child  
while it was alive;  
but when the child died,  
you arose and ate food.”

He said, “While the child was still alive,  
I fasted and wept;  
for I said,  
‘Who knows whether the Lord will be gracious to me,  
that the child may live?’  
But now he is dead; why should I fast?  
Can I bring him back again?  
I shall go to him,  
but he will not return to me.”

**The Word of the Lord.**