**1 Samuel 21:1-9 (NASB)**   
1  Then David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest; and Ahimelech came trembling to meet David and said to him, "Why are you alone and no one with you?"   
2  David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has commissioned me with a matter and has said to me, 'Let no one know anything about the matter on which I am sending you and with which I have commissioned you; and I have directed the young men to a certain place.'   
3  "Now therefore, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever can be found."   
4  The priest answered David and said, "There is no ordinary bread on hand, but there is consecrated bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women."   
5  David answered the priest and said to him, "Surely women have been kept from us as previously when I set out and the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was an ordinary journey; how much more then today will their vessels *be holy?*"   
6  So the priest gave him consecrated *bread;* for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence which was removed from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread *in its place* when it was taken away.   
7  Now one of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's shepherds.   
8  David said to Ahimelech, "Now is there not a spear or a sword on hand? For I brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's matter was urgent."   
9  Then the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, behold, it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; if you would take it for yourself, take *it.* For there is no other except it here." And David said, "There is none like it; give it to me."

Bread for sacrifice, 12 loaves for the 12 tribes on a gold table



Why was Amimelech afraid of David?

(1) David at Nob and Gath ([chap. 21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21)).

[21:1-6](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A1-6). It is difficult to trace the history of the tabernacle after the capture of the ark in 1104 b.c. The ark itself rested at Kiriath Jearim since then ([7:2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A2); [2 Sam. 6:3-4](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Sa+6%3A3-4)), but the tabernacle is not mentioned or even hinted at till [1 Samuel 21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21), when it was presumed to be at Nob, the "city of priests," where **David** fled after he made his final break with Saul. Just as David had earlier sought sanctuary with Samuel at Ramah ([19:18](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+19%3A18)), so now he went to find sanctuary with **Ahimelech** (also known as Ahijah), **the priest** at **Nob** ([21:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A1)), halfway between Jerusalem and Gibeah. Hungry from his flight, David asked the priest for **bread** ([v. 3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A3)). There was no **ordinary bread,** the **priest** replied ([v. 4](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A4)), but only the holy showbread ([Ex. 25:30](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ex+25%3A30), kjv) which had been desacralized by being replaced with fresh bread ([1 Sam. 21:6](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A6); cf. [Lev. 24:5-9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lev+24%3A5-9)). This could be eaten, as Jesus suggested later on ([Matt. 12:3-4](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+12%3A3-4)), but ordinarily only by the priests and certainly only by those who were ceremonially pure ([1 Sam. 21:4-5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A4-5); [Lev. 15:18](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lev+15%3A18)). David's eating illustrated a concession that the Law permitted—life is more holy than bread ([Matt. 12:7-8](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+12%3A7-8)).



[21:7-15](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A7-15). While **David** was at Nob, he was spotted by a spy of Saul, **Doeg the Edomite,** who informed Saul of David's whereabouts ([v. 7](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A7); [22:9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+22%3A9)). Taking Goliath's **sword** which had been kept by the priests at Nob ([21:8-9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A8-9)), **David** immediately **fled** for his life and, throwing all caution to the winds, fled to **Gath,** hometown of the dead Philistine hero Goliath ([v. 10](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A10)). Recognized by **Achish,** the lord **of Gath,** David pretended to be insane and so escaped Philistine reprisal ([vv. 11-13](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A11-13)). This is in line with the practice of the ancient world to regard the **insane** as being in some sense an evil portent and so exempt from harm lest the gods be provoked.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

Open it

1. Whom do you know who is able to "think fast on his or her feet" and come up with plausible answers in difficult situations?   
   **A friend of mine at work. Always had the quick come back and thoughts on how to get out of a bad spot.**

2. What is the most difficult aspect of spur-of-the-moment guests?  
 **Finding spots to sit, food and drink**

3. How do you imagine it might feel to aid a fugitive?   
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**Explore it**

4. What questions did Ahimelech the priest ask of David? ([21:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A1))   
 **Why are you alone?**

5. How did David explain the fact that he was alone? ([21:2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A2))   
 **That he was on a mission from the king and the king wanted no one to know about it**

6. For what provision did David ask Ahimelech? ([21:3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A3))   
 **What ever was on hand, especially bread**

7. Because he had only consecrated bread, what condition did Ahimelech have to put on the gift? ([21:4](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A4))   
 **That the young men have kept themselves from women**

8. How did David’s answer reassure Ahimelech and embellish his tale of a secret mission? ([21:5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A5))   
 **If they were holy before, how much more would they be today**

9. Why was there consecrated bread on the premises that was not on the altar? ([21:6](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A6))   
 **It had been removed to put hot bread in its place**

10. Who happened to be at Nob on the same day David visited there? ([21:7](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A7))   
 **Saul’s chief shepherd**

11. What famous sword was the only sword in the priest’s possession? ([21:9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+21%3A9))   
 **Goliath sword**

**Get it**

12. How might the story have turned out differently if David had told the priest that he was fleeing from Saul?   
 **He would probably have been turned away**

13. For what reasons might Goliath’s sword have been kept in the place of worship?   
 **As a reminder of that great battle**

14. What was it about David that probably prompted Ahimelech to fulfill his requests?   
 **He was always about God’s work and word**

15. What was good or bad about the fact that David misled the priest?   
 **Bad that he had to lie to save his own life from the king**

Apply it

16. How could you cultivate an attitude that would enable you to maintain your composure even if you were persecuted and pursued?   
 **With much prayer and study, and really knowing God**

17. What steps could you take to become better prepared to be hospitable to unexpected guests?   
 Lock the doors and turn out the lights. LOL!

**Always be prepared for it. Never know when it will happen.**