

Reading Room

- **Luke 2:1-7** - Joseph and Mary experience perfect timing
- **Micah 5:2** - Prophecy about where Jesus would be born
- **Hebrews 11** - Encouragement in faith

Warming Up the Ice

What is one thing you are looking forward to?

Summary and Lead-Ins

Timing is everything. Car breaks down on the way to an important meeting: perfect timing! Kids get sick just before vacation: perfect timing! It seems that life can be full of timings that ruin everything. But what if each and every moment was ordained by God for you to use? How does your view change?

Pre-Work

As the leader, you should have a habit of preparedness. Read this document and think of some examples that you can use if the conversation is flagging or needs more insight to help it along. Make sure you have read the passages before group and encourage everyone to participate in reading aloud. As a facilitator, it is your job to create and maintain a safe place for your small group to share and discuss that which is on their hearts.

Some Things to Talk About

This week we are exploring the juxtaposition between God's timing, which is perfect, and what can seem like circumstances that are less than ideal. More generally, what does your group think about God's timing? We have been informed that not only is God good, but He is good all the time. Do people in your group agree? Why or why not?

Using **Luke 2:1-7**, discuss how Joseph and Mary might have felt in Bethlehem. What are some things that could have helped the new parents get through their ordeal (promises, experiences, etc.). Have your small group talk about some examples of "less than ideal" timings in their own lives. Were there opportunities in their circumstances to show off how good God is? Did positive come out of what seemed like only negative?

Sometimes our poor circumstances are merely an opportunity to continue to practice faith.

Hebrews 11 is full of people from the Old Testament who lived in less than ideal circumstances. Discuss some of the people mentioned in Hebrews 11. Any that stand out to your group? What can their faith through hard times teach us about God and His timing?

Wrap Up

Start a prayer journal. An excellent way to keep track of the needs and praise that your group has it also helps you "track" how God has moved through "timings". A prayer journal can be one of the biggest sources of encouragement when life's timing feels off. Leadership tip: empower one of your group members to take on this project.

Other ways to encourage and stay in touch: group SMS message, private Facebook group, or a service like groupme.com all provide centralized ways of communicating with each other throughout the week.

