

Deep Practice Discipleship Guide

Luke 1:39–45 — *An Unexpected Visitation*

1. Opening Check-In: How Did Deep Practice Go? (10–15 minutes)

Leader Framing

Before we talk about new scripture or new ideas, we begin where we always do—with honest reflection.

This is not about success or failure.

It's about noticing, learning, and growing.

Group Prompts

- What deep practice did you commit to last week?
- Where did you notice God's presence or nudging?
- Where did you struggle, forget, or feel resistance?
- What did you learn about yourself—or about God—through that practice?

Encourage brief sharing. Normalize imperfection.

2. Scripture Focus & Extended Sermon Reflection (15 minutes)

Big Idea

God never intended us to live out our faith alone. Christ enters the world through Mary once—but He enters the world through His people again and again.

Movement 1: Mary Goes to Elizabeth (Luke 1:39–40)

Faith Seeks Community

Mary does not remain isolated with her calling. Luke tells us she “*went with haste*.” This is a decisive move—toward relationship, not retreat.

Mary seeks someone who can:

- Understand what God is doing
- Encourage her faith

- Help her endure what lies ahead

Key Truth:

We do not serve God in isolation. Community helps us endure trials and live out our calling.

Many of us struggle not because God hasn't spoken—but because we're trying to carry what God has given us alone.

Movement 2: Mary Bears Christ—Uniquely and Once (Luke 1:35)

What happens to Mary is:

- **Unique**
- **Unrepeatable**
- **Essential to salvation**

Mary physically bears Christ in a way no one else ever will.

But Luke does not linger here—because the story is not only about what happens *in* Mary, but what happens *through* her.

Movement 3: Christ Is Recognized Through Mary's Presence (Luke 1:41)

Notice what Mary does **not** do:

- She doesn't preach
- She doesn't explain
- She doesn't defend her calling

She simply arrives.

And Christ is recognized.

Key Insight:

Christ's presence is made known through Mary's presence—before words, before explanation.

Movement 4: The Spirit Reveals Christ Through the Bearer (Luke 1:42–43)

Elizabeth's recognition is not intuition or emotion—it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

This matters for us:

- We do not manufacture Christ's presence
- We do not convince others through performance
- The Spirit reveals Christ through faithful presence

This removes pressure and invites trust.

Theological Anchor

“Christ enters the world through Mary once; He enters the world through His people again and again.”

Paul names this mystery clearly:

“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27)

The Christian life is not merely following Christ—it is **living in union with Christ**.

What Bearing Christ Looks Like Today

Christ is recognized through us when:

- **His love shapes our actions**
- **His truth shapes our words**
- **His peace shapes our presence**
- **His faithfulness shapes our lives**

This is a growth process. Over time, Christ becomes more recognizable in us.

3. Discussion Questions (Bloom's Taxonomy)

Remember & Understand

1. What stands out to you most in Luke 1:39–45?
2. Why do you think Mary chooses community rather than isolation?
3. What happens before Mary ever speaks?

Apply

4. Where are you tempted to carry your faith or calling alone?
5. Who has been an “Elizabeth” in your life—someone who named God’s work in you?
6. When have you sensed Christ through someone’s presence rather than their words?

Analyze & Evaluate

7. Why do you think recognition of Christ requires the Holy Spirit?
8. Which aspect of bearing Christ feels most challenging right now?
 - Actions shaped by love
 - Words shaped by truth
 - Presence shaped by peace
 - Life shaped by faithfulness

Create

9. What would it look like to intentionally bear Christ in one relationship this week?
10. How might simply *being present* become an act of discipleship for you?

4. Storying Exercise: Christ Recognized Through Presence (15 minutes)

Story Text: Luke 24:13–35 — *The Road to Emmaus*

Why this story?

Like Mary’s visit to Elizabeth, Christ is recognized not through explanation at first—but through presence, shared journey, and the Spirit opening eyes.

Step 1: Read

Have one person read Luke 24:13–35 aloud slowly.

Step 2: Retell

- Close Bibles
- Retell the story together from memory
- Add details as remembered
- No correcting—only listening

Step 3: Reflect

1. When do the disciples finally recognize Jesus?
 2. How does Jesus' presence shape them *before* recognition?
 3. What parallels do you see with Mary and Elizabeth?
 4. What does this teach us about how Christ is often recognized today?
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5. Deep Practice Commitment for the Coming Week (10 minutes)

Leader Framing

This is not pressure or performance—it is an invitation to walk carefully with what Christ has entrusted to us.

Personal Commitment

Invite each person to write down:

This week, I will bear Christ by...

- Being present with _____
- Offering peace through _____
- Speaking truth with care in _____
- Living faithfully in _____

Encourage commitments that are:

- Small
 - Specific
 - Relational
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6. Closing Word: Bearing Christ with Care

Close by reminding the group:

You don't have to force anything this week.

You don't have to manufacture holiness.

Just walk carefully.

Walk faithfully.

Carry Christ with love.

Where you go, His presence goes with you.

And that is a gift, a responsibility, and a grace.