

**Advent: Good News, Great Joy, All People**  
“Hope Deferred”  
Growth Group Discussion Guide

**Opening Question** (get everyone involved in discussion):

- ❖ What is something for which you waited a very long time, and your desire was finally fulfilled?
- ❖ Begin your time together in prayer time and ask for God’s Spirit to reveal Himself.

**1. Read Luke 1:1-4, then discuss the following.**

- What stands out to you about Luke’s introduction to his Gospel?
- Why does Luke’s “careful investigation” matter to our reading of this book?

**2. Read Luke 1:5-7, then discuss the following**

- Do you see any apparent conflict in Luke’s description of this elderly couple as both “righteous” and “childless?”
  - Have you had the experience of living faithfully before God, and having some prayer remain seemingly unanswered?
- Pastor Josh hinted that Zechariah may have felt forgotten by God. Do you think this was the case? Why or why not?
  - Have any of you ever felt forgotten by God? What was that like? What helped you get through that experience?

**3. Read Luke 1:8-25, then discuss the following**

- What would it have meant for Zechariah to have the chance to serve in the Temple? What kind of occasion was it?
- In v. 14, before the angel describes John’s role in God’s grand plan, he speaks of his role in the life of Zechariah and Elizabeth: “He will be a joy and delight to you.” What does this observation tell you about God?
- What stands out to you about John’s role in preparing the way for Jesus? Why was his work going to be necessary?
- What do you think of Zechariah’s question, in v. 18, and the angel’s response? How do you think you would have responded to this news?
- What can you glean from Elizabeth’s response in vv. 25?

**4. Read Luke 1:57-80**

- What impact did John’s birth have on the surrounding community?
- In the events described in this chapter, we see God fulfilling the longing of an aging couple, and at the same time making good on his long-range promises.
  - Which of God’s promises do you see being fulfilled here?
  - How do you feel about the fact that God cares for the details of ordinary people’s lives, and also his grand-scheme promises? How have you seen these threads work together in your life?

- In v. 77, we notice that Israel's (and the world's) salvation wasn't going to come in the expected form, but rather, in the form of forgiveness. Why was/is this need greater than any other kind of deliverance?
- What impact does the image of the "rising sun" (v. 78) have on you?
- The big message on Sunday was that God has not forgotten you. (In fact, Zechariah's name means, "The LORD Remembers.") How easy or difficult is it for you, at this time, to believe that God remembers and cares for you?
- Pastor Josh said that with the story that plays out in Luke 1, the events were set in motion that would break the hold of sin and death over us. To what degree do these events give you hope and perseverance in the mean time?

**Prayer:**

- Invite anyone who may be carrying some unfulfilled longing to share about that, so that the group can pray accordingly.
- Pray for any other needs that exist among your group members.