

Life Group Guide
December 11-17

Prep:

Please make sure to review the material in the guide so you are prepared for the conversation in your Life Group.

Welcome:

Take a few minutes to see how your group members are getting ready for Christmas. What are they looking forward to? What are they concerned about?

Video:

Show the video. It is about 3 minutes long. It will set up the conversation for Christmas.

Scripture

Luke 2: ⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

Life Group Guide
December 11-17

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

QUESTION: Do you ever feel like your job or your responsibilities are an obstacle to spiritual life? Why do you think this?

Observation: The Bible seems to indicate that God can connect with people who live very ordinary lives. **Moses** was shepherding, **Gideon** was threshing, **Samuel** was sleeping, **Peter** was fishing, **Elisha** was plowing, **Saul** was riding, **Matthew** was collecting taxes.

QUESTION: When are you the most likely to have thoughts about God or about your spiritual growth? When are you least likely to have those thoughts?

Life Group Guide
December 11-17

QUESTION: The first thing the angel said to the shepherds was, “Do not be afraid.” Why do you think God chooses to deal with our fears before He addresses other aspects of our life?

QUESTION: The next statement of the angel – “I bring you good news of great joy.” Why do you think so many people assume when God has something to say it will be bad news?

QUESTION: Could you share an example when you heard a sermon or read a passage from Scripture that felt like good news? What made it good news to you?

OBSERVATION: The shepherds discovered God was doing something significant that day. God was doing something significant nearby.

QUESTION: What have you become aware that God is doing that is current and close by? What effect does that have on you?

OBSERVATION: Of course, the Christmas story is very inspiring. But inspiration is not a goal in and of itself. Our goal should not just be to feel inspired. Our life is transformed when we are inspired to learn, grow and serve others.

QUESTION: What or who do you find inspiring in life? Why?

Life Group Guide
December 11-17

QUESTION: Do you think your spiritual life is more influenced by your occupation or by your preoccupation? Why?

OBSERVATION: God seems to have a special connection with shepherds. After all the most famous Psalm (Psalm 23) begins with the words... "The Lord is my shepherd."

QUESTION: What do you think your greatest need is in the current season of your life? Do you need to be given wisdom and insight in upcoming decisions? Do you feel at risk and in need of protection in some area of your life? Do you feel you are missing some things in life that would help you feel healthier, stronger and more hopeful?

OBSERVATION: You have a shepherd. Your heavenly Father cares deeply for you. He desires to lead you toward your potential.

PRAYER:

It would be good to focus prayers in two specific areas as we close out this year. What concerns might some of your group members have about getting through the holidays. Second, what hopes do they have that next year will be better than this year.

Please take note of special needs in your group. Following up with a phone call or text can be so encouraging to them. Also, if there

Life Group Guide
December 11-17

is a serious issue, please make sure to communicate that info to Pastor Bob and Pastor Jonathan. There may be encouragement we can provide or additional ways to help.