

Calvary Assembly Life Group: Waiting Week of Dec 9-15, 2019

Focus

The primary goal of the evening is to understand and own in our hearts that **while we are waiting, God is working**. Because of this being our last gathering before Christmas, you're welcome to be flexible with the guide and do a shorter discussion and add in extra prayer or extra fellowship time. We leave latitude for what you think would be best for the people in your group.

Video

Show the video that was prepared for this lesson. It is less than five minutes and will help to set up the conversation for your group.

Scripture

Luke 2:8-20

The Shepherds and Angels

8 That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. 9 Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, 10 but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. 11 The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! 12 And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

15 When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

16 They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. 17 After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. 18 All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, 19 but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. 20 The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

Calvary Assembly Life Group: Waiting Week of Dec 9-15, 2019

Reflection Time

We recommend providing 4-5 minutes for the group to silently reflect on the passage.

- Just before the reflection time, encourage your group to use the time to identify questions that come to their minds.
- Have them begin to think about the main question of the evening you want to focus on. You can choose what main question you'd like to focus in on, but an example one would be **What observations do you have about the passage? Where do you assess your own spiritual life is at in this Advent/Christmas season?**
 - o You may not even start here as the opening question, but then when you do get here, people will be prepared.

Questions for Discussion

Question: What do you notice from the passage we read here in Luke 2?

Question: What is your favorite part of the whole Christmas story (it can be other parts in Scripture, not just the portion we read tonight)?

Christmas Story Ideas You Could Share To Help Spur Thoughts: God as the Light in the darkness, unexpected people being chosen by God to accomplish His purposes, Jesus born not to royalty but poverty, etc.

Question: Do you feel like you are currently in a season of waiting for something? If so, would you be willing to share about that?

Alternate Question: Micah 7:7 says: "But I will look to the Lord: I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me." What have you learned in your waiting seasons, whether past or present?

Observation: There were 400 years of waiting for people longing to hear from God. And Romans 12:12 says: "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."

Question: What is the hardest part for you in waiting for the Lord?

Question: Why do you think it's harder for us to trust in God when things aren't going our way?

Question: What do you depend on in the waiting? Where does your faith fall in the waiting? Do you more naturally turn towards God in the waiting or feel more disconnected from Him?

Calvary Assembly Life Group: Waiting Week of Dec 9-15, 2019

Question: When was a time you were in waiting and God showed up in your life and showed His faithfulness?

Leader note: Use this as an opportunity to highlight that sometimes when we are in the midst of the waiting, it can encourage us to hear stories of God's faithfulness in our own lives - or the testimony of our brothers and sisters.

Observation: Hurry and rush can be counteractive to waiting on God. In this holiday season, our schedules are often more packed than they normally are.

Question: How do you feel like you are managing being still or being content in the Lord?

Question: Why does Mary keep all these things in her heart? And think about them often?

Follow Up or Expansion of Question: When and why might we take that same approach as Mary?

Follow Up: In Verses 16 & 17, the Shepherds hurried (didn't wait) and proclaimed to everyone (didn't keep it silently in their heart). How do we know when it's appropriate to be quiet and when to share?

Observation: God shows us in his miraculous birth that he can meet with anyone at anytime in any conditions to accomplish His purposes.

Question: How do you find yourself processing this spiritual season? Do you feel Distracted? Hopeful? End of your rope? Like you're seeking meaning in a time that feels meaningless? Living in the midst of pain? Where do you find yourself spiritually at this time?

Possible Wrap Up Comment to this Question: This season isn't about just doing the right things. God has the capacity to meet us in any part of our life. And he wants to be close to us. In this season, we remember that He is at work in the waiting and lean in to Him and His promises.

Prayer

For prayer, you have a few options:

1. Pray for the **specific areas** of people's lives who are in the waiting.
2. **Shortened prayer** (just one person) to wrap up discussion and encourage extra fellowship and connection time after you release.
3. **Pray these verses** over your group as encouragement.

Calvary Assembly Life Group: Waiting Week of Dec 9-15, 2019

1. Isaiah 40:31 - "but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."
2. Psalm 27:14 - "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord."
3. 2 Peter 3:9 - "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."
4. 2 Peter 3:8 - "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day."
5. Isaiah 30:18 - "Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!"
6. Psalm 27: 13-14 "I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living! Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!"
7. Exodus 14:14 - "The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

You could also send these verses to your group in a text or email - or hand out as a print out to encourage them if they are in the waiting.

Remind your group of your **next life group gathering date**, which is **January 5-11**.

Thank you for leading and have a Merry Christmas!