

DISCUSSION GUIDE TEMPLATE

The Heart of Christmas

Discussion Guide

Week of December 17 - **"Sharing"** - "They returned glorifying and praising God for all they had seen."

Scripture verse: Luke 2:16-20

LOOKING BACK:

During our previous session each group member was challenged to serve a neighbor or family in some noticeable expression. You had all week to seek out one person/family. Who did you choose? What happened? How did your neighbor respond to your kindness?

Who was holding you accountable to reach out to this neighbor you had selected to serve? Did you remind your group partner during the week to serve a neighbor? Did your partner serve anyone this past week?

LEADER NOTE: If either partner served someone else this past week there will be some form of discussion that bubbles to the surface to share today. If neither of the paired partners engaged in serving their neighbor/family, what prevented them from listening and obeying the Holy Spirit's prompting? If no conversations surface from last week's assignment - stop moving forward in this study and re-challenge your group to reach out to a neighbor near them - especially if the Holy Spirit prompted your heart with someone to serve.

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OPENING QUESTION: What was the last thing you shared with someone when the conversation started with, "You have GOT to see this!" Share a time when you experienced or received news of something so incredible you simply had to see it for yourself?

LOOKING UP:

In our last session we heard how Jesus' birth announcement was made to a bunch of shepherds, keeping watch in the field. They received the news of Jesus' birth and promptly left for Bethlehem to see it for themselves.

1. Why do you think the shepherds wanted to leave behind their flocks and go to see for themselves what was told to them by the angels?
2. What message has the Lord shared with you that caused you to go out and immediately share it with everyone you know? How was this message handed down to you?

If you have not already done so, select two group members to be prepared to read this week's study passage from Luke chapter 2. Be sure each reader has different Bible versions available for their reading. Then move forward with the study instructions below.

READ THE PASSAGE

Luke 2:16-20

Answer the first 2 questions after reading the passage

1. What stood out to you most?
2. What was challenging or hard to understand?
3. What does this teach us about God?
4. What does this teach us about people?

RE-READ THE PASSAGE

Read the passage again using another Bible translation... then answer the last 2 questions

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LOOKING FORWARD:

The story of how the Savior of the World came to be a child born in Bethlehem is truly an amazing story, which cannot be duplicated. It is lush with unbelievable miracles that were prophesied long before they ever came to be. And when God placed his solution to man's sin problem in our midst, He simply announced it to a few shepherds through an angel accompanied by a heavenly choir. But the shepherds understood this was history in the making and went to see the miracle for themselves. But they didn't stop there, they shared it with everyone, and "returned glorifying and praising God."

1. During the Christmas season many people feel empty, sad, alone and disconnected. This is often an opportunity to bring life to another person. You have been blessed by the Lord and He wants to share that blessing with those around you. This week is an opportunity to glorify and praise God for what He has done for you by loving another.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you eyes to see someone feeling empty and alone and respond. It may be a co-worker, a relative, a person at a place you meet frequently, or a stranger. Once you notice this person, respond to his/her need by asking how you can pray for him/her. Follow up by asking if there is a need he/she has that you can meet.
3. The story of God's love for us is too great to keep quiet. There are too many people who don't yet know what Jesus' sacrifice means for them. Will you step out in faith

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this week to share the Gospel with someone who is near to you yet far from Jesus?