

## Advent – Old Fashioned Family Christmas 2019

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### **Small Group Discussion Questions**

#### **It can be hard to believe something truly good has come when we are weary of waiting**

\*When have you experienced a test of hope or a long season of waiting?

#### **Read and discuss Luke 1:5-25(NTE)**

<sup>5</sup> In the time when Herod was king of Judaea, there was a priest called Zechariah, of the priestly division of Abijah. His wife, who came from the Aaron family, was called Elisabeth. <sup>6</sup> Both of them were righteous in God's sight; they followed all the Lord's commandments and ordinances without fault. <sup>7</sup> They had no children. Elisabeth was barren, and both of them were of an advanced age.

<sup>8</sup> It so happened, when Zechariah was performing his priestly service before God, according to the order of his division, <sup>9</sup> that the lot fell to him, according to the priestly custom, to go in to the Lord's sanctuary to offer incense. <sup>10</sup> The people were praying outside in a large crowd, at the time of the incense-offering. <sup>11</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right hand side of the incense-altar. <sup>12</sup> Zechariah was troubled and terror-struck when he saw the angel.

<sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him: 'Don't be afraid, Zechariah: your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elisabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. <sup>14</sup> This will bring you joy and celebration, and many will rejoice at his birth. <sup>15</sup> He will be a great man in God's sight; he will drink no wine or strong drink. He will be filled with the holy spirit from his mother's womb, <sup>16</sup> and will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, and he will turn the hearts of fathers to children, and of unbelievers to the wisdom of the righteous. He will get ready for the Lord a prepared people.'

<sup>18</sup> 'How can I be sure of this?' said Zechariah to the angel. 'I'm an old man! My wife's not as young as she used to be, either!'

<sup>19</sup> 'Look here,' replied the angel, 'I'm Gabriel. I stand in God's presence. I was sent to speak to you and give you this splendid news. <sup>20</sup> Now, listen: you will be silent – you won't be able to speak – until the day when it all happens, because you didn't believe my words. But they will come true at the proper time.'

<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and were surprised that he was taking such a long time in the sanctuary. <sup>22</sup> But when he came out he couldn't speak to them, and they understood that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He made gestures to them, but remained speechless.

<sup>23</sup> So, when the days of his priestly service were complete, he went back home. <sup>24</sup> After that time, Elisabeth his wife conceived. She stayed in hiding for five months.

<sup>25</sup> 'This is the Lord's doing,' she said; 'at last he has looked on me, and taken away my public shame.'

\*What does this passage show us about God? About people?

\*What is this passage saying to you? Is there something here to share with someone else?

#### **God hasn't forgotten about his people and he has not overlooked you**

'Do not be afraid. God has remembered. Your prayer has been heard.'

\*What feelings do you experience in the waiting? What part does the desire to control things play here?

\*What does it look like to have faith and wait?

\*What prayer is hidden deep in your heart that you think God has forgotten?

**We are supremely important in God's family...and at the same time, we are not that important**

We are just part of what God is doing to bring the family back together.

\*How do we hold this tension – of being important to his plans, but also just a part of them?

\*Where do you see God showing you what your part is this season? What is he calling you to?