

## Celebration Small Group Guide

**Warm-up Question:** (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Do you generally let other people know when it's your birthday?
2. Describe a time when some friends or family members surprised you.

**Read the following passage:** Luke 1:5-18.

The day Zechariah went into the Temple to burn incense was the greatest day of his life. This honor was considered so great that a priest was only permitted to perform this duty at most once in his lifetime. And when Zechariah went into the Temple, an angel appeared to him! Instead of celebrating the angel's news, Zechariah asked, "How can I be sure of this?" Years of pain and disappointment can make it difficult to receive and celebrate good news. But over the next nine months, Zechariah experienced a transformation. And by the time his son, John, was born, Zechariah was ready to celebrate what God was doing for him and his people.

**Questions for Discussion** (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Generally speaking, is celebration, even for small things, a regular part of your life? Explain.
2. God built celebration into the Jewish calendar in the form of regular festivals. As just one example, consider the description of the Festival of Tabernacles in Deuteronomy 16:13-15. Why do you think God did this? Why is celebration important for us?
3. Read Romans 5:1-11. Explain why followers of Jesus always have reasons to celebrate. Do the great blessings of the Gospel feel real in your life? Explain.
4. Read Luke 1:39-49. What does Mary's story teach us about celebration as a shared experience? Do you have people in your life who will genuinely celebrate with you?
5. Read Luke 2:8-20. Shepherds in first-century Israel were typically social "outsiders," not social "insiders." In what sense did God incorporate these outsiders into his mission? Do you have a sense of being on mission with God? Explain.
6. What are a few ways you can more effectively incorporate celebration into your life?

**Pray**