

## **The Risk of Hope 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. Is there a special destination you would like to go at some point in your life before you die?
2. What's the best gift under \$10 somebody could give you this year?

**Read the following passage:** Luke 1:5-20.

John the Baptist's ministry of preaching and baptizing prepared the people of Israel to receive Jesus the Messiah. But before John was born, his parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth, were surprised by God's seemingly overdue answer to their prayer for a child. Their lives provide us with a powerful picture of the importance and difficulty of hope.

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

1. Why is hope such an important part of life? Explain the sense in which hope can also be risky.
2. Read Psalm 127. Given this viewpoint on having children, how do you think childlessness affected Zechariah and Elizabeth? Are there any areas in your life in which past delays or disappointments have affected you?
3. Can you recall any examples from the Scriptures in which people had to wait a long period of time before receiving what had been promised by God? What are some of the reasons God may allow us to experience delays in our lives?
4. Read Deuteronomy 8:1-5. What are some of the ways God used the wilderness experience for the good of the Israelites? Was God abandoning them?
5. Read Luke 2:25-38. Simeon and Anna had been waiting for the promise of God for a long time, but were still full of hope. What observations about their lives might help us maintain hope in our own lives?
6. What is one area of your life in which you need to freshly embrace hope?
7. What is one thing you can begin doing to help build greater hope in your life?

**Pray**