

Unexpected Christmas - God 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. Are you doing now what you thought ten years ago you would be doing now? Explain.
2. What's one of your favorite foods associated with the holidays?

Read the following passage: Luke 1:5-22.

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

1. What were some of the ways this experience in the Temple was surprising or unexpected for Zechariah?
2. One of the most common "complaints" in the Psalms is the complaint that things are not going how the psalmist expected or thought they should. Using the following categories as a guide, explain the sense in which God's actions surrounding the birth of Jesus were unexpected.
 - a. God's timing (see, for example, Luke 1:18, 34; 2:1-6)
 - b. The people to whom God announced the birth of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 2:1-2 and Luke 2:8-12)
 - c. The process God used to prepare John and Jesus for ministry (Luke 1:80; Luke 2:39-40; compare with John 1:44-46)
 - d. The salvation that God is bringing through Jesus (Matthew 1:20-21)
3. What are some ways that things have not gone how you expected in your life, or that God has not done what you thought He would or should do?
4. There are many reasons God may not do what we hope or expect Him to do. Here are four purposes that often underlie God's actions: a) His desire to get our attention; b) His desire to highlight His grace; c) His desire to get us to embrace a mission much bigger than ourselves, our family, or our preferred people group; and d) His desire that we would be in His presence. Explain some of the ways these themes emerge in the events surrounding the birth of Jesus.
5. Looking at your life, can you see how some of the purposes listed in the question above might have been behind some of the things you have experienced? Explain.

6. What should we do when we don't understand what's going on in our lives?

Pray