

1. Gather & Share Food / Drink 25 MINS

2. Worship Music 10 MINS

3. Read the Sunday Gospel 5 MINS

LUKE 1:5-17

In the days of King Herod of Judaea there lived a priest called Zechariah and he had a wife, Elizabeth. Both were worthy in the sight of God, and scrupulously observed all the commandments and observances of the Lord. But they were childless: Elizabeth was barren and they were both getting on in years.

Now it was the turn of Zechariah's section to serve, and it fell to him by lot to enter the Lord's sanctuary and burn incense there. And at the hour of incense the whole congregation was outside, praying.

Then there appeared to him the angel of the Lord, standing on the right of the altar of incense. The sight disturbed Zechariah and he was overcome with fear. But the angel said to him, 'Zechariah, do not be afraid, your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth is to bear you a son and you must name him John. He will be your joy and delight and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord; he must drink no wine, no strong drink. Even from his mother's womb he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, and he will bring back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah, he will go before him to turn the hearts of fathers towards their children and the disobedient back to the wisdom that the virtuous have, preparing for the Lord a people fit for him.'

4. Personal Sharing based on the Gospel 5-10 MINS

In the weeks before meeting today, a member of the group was invited to prepare a short, 5-10 minute sharing on how this Gospel reading connects with their life and relationship with Jesus. They have considered the questions below in the process of preparing their sharing:

- The angel says "Zechariah, do not be afraid, your prayer has been heard". Do you have an experience of God answering a prayer in your life (even if the answer was "no" or "not now")? What did you pray for? How did God's answer impact your life?
- The angel shares with Zechariah the great mission and purpose that his son, John the Baptist, will have. Have you ever experienced discovering the God-given purpose for your life? Do you follow it? Have you had difficulties or struggles in following it? What has been the fruit of following it?

5. Smaller Group Discussion 20 MINS

Break into smaller sharing groups of 3-5 people and discuss the following questions.

- What really struck you from the personal sharing? Have you had a similar experience?
- Respond to the sharing prompts in section 4, to break open the Gospel.
- What has been one high point and one challenge in your faith Journey since we last met?

6. Prayer in Small Groups 15 MINS

Remain in your smaller discussion groups for a time of prayer.

- Conscious of what has just been shared, briefly name/describe your prayer needs.
- Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
- Move to prayers of thanks and praise to God
- Pray for each other's prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
- Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps reciting the 'Glory Be' or similar prayer.

7. Closing Prayer 5 MINS

After you have had time to pray for one another in your smaller groups, a leader closes the evening with a final prayer in the large group.