



COMMUNITY GUIDE

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WEEKLY APPLICATION

“The person who loves their dreams of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community.”

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer

OVERVIEW

Week 3 Advent // Joy

Read: Luke 1:39-55

When Mary finds out that she is pregnant, she goes to spend her first trimester with her elderly cousin, Elizabeth, who is in her last trimester. It is likely they are both, given their ages, in the midst of the most challenging parts of their respective pregnancies. It is from this place that they enter into community with one another. We might expect Elizabeth, who has waited her whole life for a child, might approach her cousin with scorn, jealousy, suspicion, or a spirit of competition. But not so. When Mary arrives, Elizabeth literally cries out loudly to bless Mary and the thing that God is doing in her. These women, absent the voices of men in their lives, have a holy moment of honoring the thing that God is doing in both of them. This is an opportunity for them to share their stories, believe with each other, and be together. This community between the women is a gift from God to them for their health, their joy, and their belief in what God is doing in them. Our spirituality may be tied up in finding God in specific ways – reading the Bible, praying, and going to Church. We have been taught a lie that all things spiritual happen separate from community. But one of the greatest “joy gifts” in your life are the people who make you think, laugh, and celebrate your life with you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is something that God is doing in you right now that is bringing you joy or growth? Share that story with your friends, family, or spouse and ask them the same question. Pay attention to your mind as you converse and celebrate with those who are sharing.
2. What do you feel or experience as you share and listen to stories?
3. Is it difficult for you to “practice joy” by being reminded of the good things that God is doing in your life? If you are unsure, ask a close friend and be open to receiving their feedback.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help me to see the things that you are doing in my life that I often take for granted. This week, I invite you to help me enjoy one moment at a time, trusting that you will make all things right if I surrender to your will. May I find deep resonating joy in you as I know you desire to continually reveal yourself to me. Amen.

IN THIS TOGETHER!