



## ***Leader Guide – Weekly Gathering***

**Luke 2:41-52 • January 14, 2007 • by Steve Fawver**

### **Opening (5 minutes)**

Take time as leaders to welcome people and set a tone of joy and openness in community.

### **Check-in Time (15 minutes)**

Who is someone you admire? What about him or her do you admire?

### **Centering Worship (10 minutes)**

Invite people to take a few deep breaths as you enter this time of centering.

Play the song "Lord, You Have My Heart" from the *Listening Life* CD.

Leave a few moments of silence and then invite someone to speak a prayer on behalf of the group as you continue to listen together.

### **Sharing (15 minutes)**

Questions you might use during this time:

- Where have you experienced God this week?
- What stood out to you as you used the exercises this week?
- What exercise or section of Scripture caught your attention and why?
- Ask group members to look back over their journals and share some things that catch their attention.
- Ask group members to look back at the last worship gathering on Sunday. Where did they experience God?
- What did you notice (sense, feel, think, learn) this week as we gathered for worship?
- How did God show up in your life this week?
- How have you been intentional in creating space to listen to Christ this week?
- How have you noticed Christ calling you to "live out love" this week?

### **Group Listening Practice (40 minutes)**

Need: people assigned to read Scriptures, paper, pens

Take a few moments to list the questions of faith that people may wrestle with. Write these down on a piece of paper as a scribe for the group.

Say: What questions of faith do people wrestle with? Let's list these questions. No question is off limits. These may be your questions or questions that other people may wrestle with. Take 5-6 minutes to list these questions together as a group.

After you sense it is time to move forward encourage people to turn to one other person and talk about their level of comfort in asking God the hard questions.

Say: Do you feel like it is okay to ask God the things that are really tough for you? Turn to the person next to you and share about this for a few minutes. Do you feel free to be open and honest with God?

Give people 4-5 minutes to share together.

Gather back together and have someone read the following Scriptures out loud for the group (you may want to have people ready to read and “assign” these as people arrive):

- Ephesians 5:15-17
- Colossians 2:6-7
- John 16:12-14
- Luke 11:9-10

Say: Now let’s do exactly what these Scriptures say—ask, seek, knock.

Write a letter to God:

Say: I will give you a piece of paper and I want to encourage you to prayerfully write a letter to God. Ask questions, share your desires, or write whatever else comes to the surface. We will have about 5 minutes to do this. Prayerfully write a letter to God.

Distribute paper and give 5 minutes for people to write. You may want to prompt them when there is about 1 minute left to write.

Write a letter *from* God:

Say: I now want to encourage you to turn the paper over and prayerfully write a letter to you from God. What do you sense God is saying to you right now? Be the scribe for God as you write the things that you sense. Don’t feel like you have to “get it all right,” but just write the things that come to the surface for you. We will have about 5 minutes for this.

Remind the group when there is about 1 minute left to write.

Close the time by praying a simple prayer of thanks to God for being willing to let us ask, seek, and knock.

Debrief:

What was that experience like for you?

What did you notice?

Which was more challenging—to write *to* God or *from* God?

How did God seem to be speaking to you?

### **Closing (5 minutes)**

Encourage people to be intentional this week to continue to wrestle with what they believe—study Scripture, read, talk to people, and do what it takes to continue to grow in their faith.