

Small Group Discussion Questions

Advent: Do Not Fear

These questions are designed to invite group reflection on today's Bible passage and life application of the themes introduced in today's sermon.

Week 3: Do Not Fear Disruption

Luke 1:26-38

1. Recall an event or experience that significantly disrupted your life. Was the event expected or unexpected? Was the level of disruption it introduced anticipated or did it come as a surprise? In hindsight, was the disruption all *bad*; all *good*; or a combination of both?
2. Last week we considered Elizabeth, Zechariah and the welcome gift of a child. This week we meet Mary. What specific things do we know (or safely assume) about Mary? Who intrudes upon Mary at the beginning of today's passage? Where have we met him before? How do you imagine Mary felt in the moment? What is the visitor's first statement? What is Mary's immediate reaction?
3. What does the angel say in response to Mary's reaction? Where have we heard this statement before? What might be some reasons the angel repeats this statement?
4. The angel gives Mary a general word of good news. What is it? The angel then follows with a specific statement intended to be good news. What is it? What are some ways this promised event *might* feel like bad news to Mary?
5. God has two general goals for all believers. What are they? In general, what are our goals for ourselves? Are God's goals and ours always compatible? When our plans are disrupted, how do we typically react?
6. Through the angel Gabriel, God discloses a plan that will disrupt Mary's life. What purposes of God will come out of this plan? Imagine you are Mary. Would you consider the cost of your personal sacrifices a worth the benefits of God's greater purposes – even if you didn't live to see those purposes fulfilled?
7. God asks Mary to entrust her plans to Him. What does God entrust to Mary? What is Mary's response?
8. God invites us to entrust our plans to Him. Which cherished hope or goal of your life do you have difficulty entrusting to God? What promises of God might be worth trading for your hopes and goals? What does God entrust to us, members of the Body of Christ? Are you prepared to respond the way Mary did?

Pray: For God to show you some of the ways His disruptions serve good purposes; for God to give you grace when you can't see the good in His disruptive action in your life; for God to accomplish His best purposes for you – drawing you closer to Christ, and making you more like Christ.