



There are many words we associate with the Christmas season: Joy, Faith, Hope, Love. But the word “Fear” isn’t usually one of them. Nevertheless, as we read the accounts of Christ’s birth in the Bible, the phrase “Do not be afraid” appears frequently. Maybe we have become too familiar with the story to recognize the key characters as human, with circumstances and emotions we can relate to. Fear is so much a part of our human experience that it should come as no surprise that even at Christmas (maybe especially at Christmas) fear is with us. This Advent Season, as we contemplate the miracle of “God With Us” may we hear Him when He says, “Fear not.”

### Week One: Are You Afraid to Trust God? (*Luke 1:26-38*)

#### Discussion Questions:

The following are based on the “My Application” Questions found in the bulletin this week. (Leader, urge your group members to attend worship—or watch the sermon online—and to spend time considering and answering those questions before coming to the group. This will produce a richer discussion time.)

- 1) What is something that you were fearful of as a child? Why were you afraid?
- 2) What is something that you are afraid of as an adult?
- 3) Describe an “interruption” in your life that has completely changed the trajectory of your life.
- 4) In what ways was that interruption inconvenient? How did it let you see God at work?
- 5) Why is it sometimes difficult to trust God when He interrupts? Is fear a factor?
- 6) What circumstance are you facing that is an “interruption” to your plans or expectations? What are you afraid of in that situation?
- 7) What does it look like, practically speaking, to move forward in trust and obedience to God even when you don’t understand the why behind what is happening?

### Application:

Paul Tripp says, "God will take you where you haven't intended to go in order to produce in you what you could not achieve on your own." In other words, God sometimes interrupts us to invite us to join Him in something greater, and to see His power at work.

- Identify an area of your life that is not going according to your plans or expectations. Then identify how that situation makes you anxious or fearful.
- Commit between now and Christmas to pray daily about that situation. If you are married, you might want to ask your spouse to join you.
- Try not to tell God how to fix your circumstances. Instead, ask Him to show you how you can cooperate with Him in the midst of it all. Ask Him show you what it means to trust and obey Him in this circumstances.
- Ask God to show you His Power, and how He is at work around you and in you.

### Group Prayer:

- Praise God that His plans for you are greater than the plans you make for yourself.
- Thank Him for those past interruptions that have lead you into great places with Him, and for allowing you to see His Power at work. Be specific about the stories you heard from each other and how they encouraged you all.
- Pray for each other. Talk to God about the current situations that are making each of you anxious and are stretching your ability to trust Him.

### Scripture Memory:

*For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*

*2 Timothy 1:7*