



Celebration

Celebrating God's Hope

What holds you back from celebrating? What keeps you from being home and full of joy for this season? Instead of being critical of the commercialization of Christmas, we ought to be overwhelmingly engaged with the fullness of the meaning of Christmas. Celebrating means choosing to see hope rather than despair. It means engaging in the practice of seeing God's help, His joy, our real selves, and real hope in times of trouble.

FOCAL POINT: We can change how we see our lives from a perspective of despair to a perspective of hope.



Getting Started

Catch up together about how your week has been, possibly also revisit last week's meeting.

- ▶ What are you the most excited for this holiday season?



Exploring Scripture

Read the following passage together.

Psalm 30

- ▶ Where do you hear God's heart in this passage?
- ▶ What words or phrases stick out to you?



Reflection

Take time to reflect together about the passage.

- ▶ David's "dancing" is not in absence of pain or struggle. Rather, he dances because of how God has provided for him even in difficult situations. Looking at this Psalm, what do you notice about David's relationship with God in hard times?
- ▶ Describe a difficult time in your life, and how you did or didn't feel God's presence with you. What might have helped you to see God's presence more clearly?



Praxis

With the understanding that we gathered here are the body of Christ, let's allow the truth from today's scripture to impact us as a LifeGroup.

- ▶ Let's practice allowing ourselves to celebrate God's presence in difficult times. Often we tend to view our lives and pain through a certain lens: one of loneliness, or one of God's presence and comfort.
 - ▶ Let's each picture something in our lives that is difficult currently. As you dwell on it, notice the feelings of loneliness that might be there. What does it feel like? What thoughts or words come to mind?
 - ▶ Let's share a few of those thoughts together.
 - ▶ Now that we've shared, instead of praying for these difficulties, let's recognize God's presence with us, guiding us, growing us, taking care of us, even in these difficult times. What would you need to hear from God to help you celebrate his presence with you?
 - ▶ Pray and give thanks.



Moving Outward

Challenge each other to live out God's truth this week.

- ▶ Schedule one other time this week you can pause and thank God for his hope in times of trouble.

Psalm 30

I will exalt you, Lord,
for you lifted me out of the depths
and did not let my enemies gloat over me.
Lord my God, I called to you for help,
and you healed me.
You, Lord, brought me up from the realm of the dead;
you spared me from going down to the pit.
Sing the praises of the Lord, you his faithful people;
praise his holy name.
For his anger lasts only a moment,
but his favor lasts a lifetime;
weeping may stay for the night,
but rejoicing comes in the morning.
When I felt secure, I said,
"I will never be shaken."
Lord, when you favored me,
you made my royal mountain stand firm;
but when you hid your face,
I was dismayed.
To you, Lord, I called;
to the Lord I cried for mercy:
"What is gained if I am silenced,
if I go down to the pit?
Will the dust praise you?
Will it proclaim your faithfulness?
Hear, Lord, and be merciful to me;

Lord, be my help."

You turned my wailing into dancing;

you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,
that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent.

Lord my God, I will praise you forever.