

Christmas LONGING

HOPE
PEACE
FULFILLMENT

Key Truth/Principle: We have HOPE for eternity because Jesus came to this earth as a baby as part of God's salvation plan. God gives us HOPE for each day because of His great love for us. The Holy Spirit gives us the strength we need to keep longing/ Hoping well.

Key Verse(s): ... Luke 1: 5-7, Luke 1: 39-45, Isaiah 55: 8-9, Psalm 37: 4, Lamentations 3:19-24, Philippians 1:21, Romans 15:13

Suggested format: Social time/ice-breaker, Word, worship with communion and prayer

Key Point(s)

- Is it ok to long for something?
- Holding onto hope in the waiting and through disappointment.

**** TOP TIPS ****

Remember people are indwelt with the spirit – expect them to have something to bring – most just need permission and clarity, and yearn for depth.

- **WELCOME:** Have fun, involve everyone, keep it moving
- **WORSHIP:** Deliberately LEAD people into stepping out – most people appreciate specific guidance and feel released to know how to participate (e.g. let's read a Psalm together and use the words to help us worship, let's listen to this song, let's sing now, let's have a time of prophecy and hearing from God, if you feel you want to start a song please do). Encourage gifts!
- **PRAYER:** Weave into all you do, respond to things as they come up and help people by being specific (e.g. let's all go round and pray short prayers thanking God for a particular characteristic
- **WORD:** Some folks would not have been there on Sunday – don't; worry too much about recapping, just dive into questions. Splitting people into pairs/small groups with specific question and a time frame usually brings out the best discussion and involvement of everyone.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. How do you 'test' whether what you are longing for is honouring to God?

2. How can you keep your hope in God alive through the waiting or through disappointment?

- Be honest with God – share your heart with Him.
- Remind yourself daily of the power of God's love for you – Lamentations 3:19-24
- Spend time with God and don't try to work things out on your own.
- Be thankful even for the little things. Gratitude is a powerful thing.
- Worship rather than worry.
- Have the right people around you who will point you to God and the hope you have in Him.
- Believe that God is at work behind the scenes.

3. How do we come to a place of finding our fulfilment completely in Jesus despite the circumstances?

4. Share stories of God's faithfulness in your life and how He has brought you HOPE in difficult times.

