

LUKE 1:57-66

12 NOVEMBER 2023

ICE BREAKER: Who **named** you and what is the **significance** of your name?

LARGE GROUP QUESTIONS:

(Luke 1:13) When the angel Gabriel visited Zechariah, he proclaimed that Zechariah's old and barren wife would give birth to a son. Gabriel commanded Zechariah that God wanted his name to be **John**. John means "God is gracious." Throughout the Bible, God takes personal interest in our names. God does not relate to us as a **number** in a crowd. God **knows** us by **name**. Our names, how we are to be called, is important to God.

1. Why do you think **God** takes so much **peculiar interest** in our **names**?

(Read verses 57-60) Through the angel Gabriel, God had **commanded** Zechariah to name his new son **John**. Most likely, Zechariah communicated God's will also to his wife Elizabeth. When the birth of the baby arrived, their "neighbors and relatives" praised the Lord and "they shared her joy."

Following tradition to honor the father, they pressured Elizabeth to name the boy Zechariah. However, Elizabeth "**spoke up** and said, '**No!** He is to be called John.'" Elizabeth said "**No!**" to relatives and friends so she could say "**Yes!**" in obedience to God. Elizabeth chose to say "No!" to tradition and to others' strong opinions.

2. How have you had to say "**No!**" to relatives and friends so you could say "**Yes!**" to God's commands?

(Read verses 60-63) The relatives and friends of Zechariah and Elizabeth were not satisfied with Elizabeth's request to name the child John. They turned from her and sought Zechariah's approval to name the child Zechariah. However, Zechariah responded exactly as his wife did. The child would be named John, just as God had commanded.

Zechariah and Elizabeth demonstrated **unity** in their **obedience** to God. Facing the disapproval of well-meaning relatives and friends, Zechariah and Elizabeth stood united in their obedience to God.

3. How has **unity** or **disunity** in your **Christian faith** effected how you have **faced a disagreement** or **crisis** in your marriage, family, or significant relationship?

(Read Luke 1:18-20 & verses 62-66) When the Angel Gabriel proclaimed to Zechariah that his old, barren wife would bear a son, Zechariah **doubted** God. For Zechariah's lack of faith, Gabriel proclaimed, "And now you will be **silent** and **not able** to **speak** until the day this happens, because you did **not believe** my words, which will come true at their **proper time**." Not only was Zechariah unable to speak, but apparently he was made **deaf**.

When Elizabeth gave birth and Zechariah **obeyed** in naming the child John, God **healed** Zechariah from his **handicap** of being mute and deaf. The instantaneous **miracle** filled the relatives and neighbors with awe. News of this miracle spread quickly to surrounding cities as a **testimony** to God.

Our world considers physical infirmities as **sad** and **unfortunate**. Until God heals our physical handicap at their "**proper time**", God has a **divine purpose** for the handicap and limitations we have.

4. How has an **injury**, even **physical handicap** or **limitation** been used by God for **your good** and **His glory**?

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE & USE PRAYER LIST AS BIBLE BOOK MARKER

PRAYER GROUP TIME

(Make a list of people whom those in your group plan to share Jesus with this week or invite to Celebration.)
