

DECEMBER 22 & 23

Fear Not: Shepherds

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Introduction

At time of Christ's birth, the shepherds near Bethlehem were ordinary people, but it's to these regular Joes the angel appeared and proclaimed the birth of Jesus. God has a habit of doing His most amazing work under the cover of ordinary life.

Discussion

1. **Read Luke 2:1-20.** Imagine how you as a shepherd might have felt being visited by angelic beings. Have you ever felt God isn't interested in your ordinary life? Share a story when God unexpectedly showed up in your life.
2. As a group, make a list of Old and New Testament characters who were ordinary people, living ordinary lives, until God burst in. How do you suppose the shepherds' lives changed after the events of Christmas? How do we change once we surprisingly encounter God?
3. **Read the account in Acts 4:1-22.** What made these ordinary men extraordinary?
4. **Read Isaiah 64:3-4 and Ephesians 3:14-21.** The Bible tells us through the Holy Spirit and as we wait on Him, God works through us and on our behalf. Scripture tells us the shepherds left telling what they had seen and heard. Share an amazing thing God has done in your life recently.

Do Something

1. Recall a time when God unexpectedly touched your life, and like the shepherds, share it with someone else.
2. During the Christmas holidays, journal and praise God for the amazing things He has done and is now doing in your life. Take a "year-end blessings" inventory to keep as a record for your family.
3. During your quiet time with God, listen for the nudges He's giving you for next steps in your faith, and take that step of obedience.

Resources

1. *God and Starbucks* by Vin Baker recounts the story of a pro basketball player who finds God as He unexpectedly enters his dark world.
2. Study Luke's account of the Christmas story with a study Bible. If you don't own one, check out this free trial on biblegateway.com.
3. *God for the Rest of Us* on RightNow Media chronicles the lives of several people in a Las Vegas church who were transformed from their "ordinary" lives by the power of God's love. Sign up for your free RightNow Media account at prairielakeschurch.org.