**“GOD IS WITH US” (P1)**

**December 14 – 15, 2024**

**Speaker: Tom Hughes**

**Opening:** [15 mins] Begin with an opening prayer and then a brief “catch up” or “icebreaker” before moving into the *scripture reflection* and *application questions*.

**Icebreaker:** “Tell Me More” – What’s a gift someone gave you that you’ll never forget? OR “What food or song always brings back good memories?

**Scripture Reflection:** [20 mins] **Isaiah 7:14 (AMP)** “Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign: Listen carefully, the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and she will call his name Immanuel (God with us).”

Read the passage. If you have time, you might read it twice, silently and out loud. As you are reading, think through these questions:

* What words or phrase stand out to you?
* What do I see about God? What is God doing (or inviting us to) in this passage?

**Application Questions:** [40 mins](*These questions will help you and your group dig deeper into the weekend sermon. Feel free to edit or use only those which fit your allotted time.)*

Tom gave three reasons below why it was important for God to tell us that Jesus would be coming – and then perfectly fulfilled it in history in the first Christmas – to be “Immanuel” God with us.

1. God’s presence reveals God’s priorities. You are a priority to God. God didn’t just send an angel, prophet, ambassador, or pastor. God came himself, in Jesus.
   1. Do you believe that you are God’s priority? If so, why? If not, why not?
   2. How does knowing that you are God’s priority encourage you today?
   3. How might you change how you live based on this knowledge?
2. God’s presence offers us joy and peace in the midst of our challenges. Luke in verse 2:10 - 11, encouraged the first century Christians who faced persecution to “not be afraid.” Read 2:10 – 11.
   1. Perhaps you’re dealing with loss, financial stress, or broken relationships, or maybe this Christmas finds you in a season of hardship. Why should knowing “God is with us” bring us “great joy”? Not just joy, but GREAT joy!
   2. The good news is that God is not absent in your pain. God’s presence doesn’t always remove trials, but it sustains us through them. Can you share a time in your life that you felt God’s presence while going through a tough time?
3. God’s presence is an opportunity: You can go all in on Christ because He went all in on you. Tom said that we could respond to God’s presence by: a) Receiving His Presence by accepting Jesus into your life; b) Resting in His Presence by letting His presence bring you peace and joy; c) Sharing His Presence by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ that brings peace and joy.
   1. Which of the three responses above will you practice this Christmas season?
   2. Will you stand on God’s promises revealed in the Bible knowing they will be fulfilled?

**Closing & Prayer**: [15 mins]

* Ask the people present if they know someone that who is going through a difficult time that they could encourage and share the good news of Jesus Christ.
* Receive prayer requests. Pray for group members. Share prayers of gratitude.