

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



Alive: Spirit of Hope

August 20 & 21, 2022

Hope is both a gift and a practice. Or, to put it another way, while hope is rooted in God's grace, hope blooms in our lives as we practice living hopefully.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: PSALM 126

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

Psalms 126 is one of 15 psalms called the "Psalms of Ascent". These were songs that religious pilgrims would sing as they walked up to the temple in Jerusalem for religious festivals. This particular psalm seems to have been written shortly after God had set the Israelites free from their 70-year captivity in Babylon. The psalm celebrates that God had set the captives free, but it also gives voice to the pain and hopelessness they felt. And so, within this short psalm you're going to hear seemingly conflicting emotions. You're going to hear celebration of what God did in the past, and grief over how hard life is in the writer's present.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Psalm 126 is a brilliant tutorial in hopeful living. What other scripture passages bring you hope? Share about a time a passage of scripture helped you through a difficult time in your life. (See Jeremiah 29:11, 2 Corinthians 4:18, Romans 15:13, Psalm 62:5-6, 1 Peter 5:10, Isaiah 40:31, and Philippians 1:6 for some ideas.)
- Psalm 126 starts with remembering. What experience(s) of God's faithfulness in your past brings you hope when you face challenging circumstances?
- After remembering, the Psalmist prays. Share about a time when prayer "breathed the oxygen of God's love and grace into a suffocating challenge you faced." How did God answer—or meet you—in your prayer?
- After remembering and praying, the Israelites planted. "Hope says plant a seed. Take a step. And then trust that something good will grow by God's grace." In what barren, unproductive places in your life have you given up hope? What is a seed you can plant to grow hope in one of those places?

APPLICATION: Read and reflect on Ephesians 3:20. Thank God for giving us the Spirit of Hope.