

Icebreaker:

What is your favorite celebration of the year? Is it birthdays, Christmas, or another special occasion to you or your family?

1. Revelation 19 talks about an incredibly loud celebration of what God has done in the world. If you could have a loud celebration about one thing that God has done for you, what would it be?
2. Some see Christianity as a set of rules to follow and see God as one who makes the rules. How might this view inhibit our ability to celebrate? What in Revelation 19:4-9 or Zephaniah 3:14-18 might help us see God as more than a rule-maker and make us want to rejoice and celebrate?
3. In Zephaniah 3, God rejoices and sings over his people. Do you believe that God delights in you? Do you believe that God enjoys you? Why or why not?
4. Celebrations in Luke 15 are more extravagant than efficient. Do you find it easier to be extravagant or efficient?
5. Who is someone whom God has used in extraordinary ways to make a big impact in your life? What was that impact and how might you celebrate it?
6. What is one practical way the church in general and ZPC specifically could celebrate more? What is one practical way you as an individual, with your family or with your home group could celebrate God's work?

Prayer:

As you pray for one another, please pray for the following needs in our church family:

prayer requests

- > Prayers of healing for Doug Conner, Regina Franks, Greg Mahler, Ken Miller, and Robert Neal.
- > Prayers of comfort for Ann and Ken Kolmerton in the death of her son.

[The following are from ZPC's prayer calendar, which is available at the Welcome Center or at zpc.org/prayer.]

- > Pray for this (60+) ministry that meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month as they grow in their relationship with God, one another, and our church family.
- > Pray for Shepherd Community Center that cultivates healthy children, stronger families, and safer neighborhoods on the near east side of Indianapolis.

With the theme of celebration, refer to all three passages above (Revelation 19, Zephaniah 3, and Luke 15) in that order. All of us love a good party and a reason to celebrate. However, when we think of our faith, we often focus on the seriousness of it. In the Old Testament, God told the Israelites to have specific festivals to remember their history and to celebrate. Jesus told stories of how people celebrated when someone who was lost was found. Explore the opportunity to celebrate more what God has done or is doing in your life.

1. Revelation 19:8 says the shouting of praise sounds like "the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder." We hear loud shouting and cheering at fun music concerts or exciting sporting events. Imagine being able to shout, cheer and have a loud celebration for something God had done for you. What would that be like?
2. Seeing that God is all about rules and right and wrong makes Christianity a task and not a relationship. These passages in Revelation and Zephaniah are about joy, praise, and celebration that God loves us and cares about us and the great things God has done. When we see God like that, it is easier to celebrate with God and others.
3. This is a personal question that requires a personal answer. The evidence in Zephaniah 3 and from Jesus in the New Testament and that God cares deeply about us, delights in us and celebrates us. Imagine God having your picture on his cellphone or in his wallet and showing you off to others because God is proud of you.
4. Most Americans and Protestant Christians are efficient and pragmatic – even in the ways we worship. We don't often raise our hands in praise and we worry about keeping our worship services on time. In Luke 15, there is great rejoicing over one coin, one sheep and a huge party for a rebellious son. This teaches us that God is extravagant in his love for his children, especially those who were lost and are now found. We too need to be extravagant sometimes.
5. Author Richard Foster says that as Christians, we should celebrate those who helped us grow closer to Christ. Typically, we know Jesus because someone led us to Jesus. Who is that in your life? Name them. Think of a way to celebrate that person or persons.
6. Churches could celebrate more in worship, or in church brunches, church parties, or other ways. What is one suggestion you have? How could you celebrate what God has done with your family or home group? Could you be more extravagant than efficient?