

Guide to a Meditation for Advent Preparing for Advent

1. Advent is a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of Jesus coming to the earth to be born as a human, which we celebrate as Christmas Day. It comes from the Latin word meaning “coming”.

What does Christmas mean to you? (share thoughts)

It may mean celebrating the birth of Jesus. It may mean having a day/week off of work. It may mean the opportunity to serve the less fortunate a nice meal. It may mean spending time with loved ones. For children it is often the receiving of gifts.

For many people it is a difficult time, especially for those who have recently lost loved ones. It is a very lonely time for many – suicide rates are highest around this time.

One of the joys of the advent season is the singing of beautiful Christmas songs. Handel’s Messiah is often celebrated. We sing Christmas carols in church and we hear them on the radio and in the shops.

In Luke 1 when Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, Mary responds with words of trust and surrender to God’s plan for her in what we refer to as “Mary’s Song” or “The Magnificat”. One of the things she says is “He fills the hungry with good things.”

What is on your heart for this Advent season and for Christmas this year? Take 5 minutes and reflect on this question:

What are my needs and desires for this coming season? What am I hungry for?

Consider both physical and practical things (health, finances, a job, a particular need...) as well as the needs and desires of your heart. (peace, comfort, companionship, love, security...) (feel free to add to the list).

2. (Letting go) Quietly sing or read just the first verse of **Joy to the World** and reflect on the words.

Joy to The world! the Lord is come
Let earth receive her King
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room
And heaven and nature sing (X3)

Note the phrase “Let every heart prepare him room”. In Luke 2:7 it says that “Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and places him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn.” The inn was full and there was no capacity to receive a pregnant woman who would give birth to the Saviour of the world.

Perhaps this can also be a metaphor for our busy lives and hearts full of “stuff”. For many of us, this has been a very busy year. We are tired, exhausted, weary. We run from one thing to the next. It is necessary sometimes to stop and rest. To listen. To just sit and be with God. Maybe walk in nature, walk on the beach, sit in a garden and just breathe. And listen.

The second question to reflect on is “What can I do to prepare room for Jesus? Are there things I need to let go of, even just for a few weeks? Maybe my schedule is too full? Maybe I am worrying about someone or something and I can open my hands and offer this to God. Maybe I am doubting God, or afraid of something. Maybe I am holding on to something that I think I need to control and it is crowding out my joy and my ability to receive what God actually wants to give because I am determined that God should make something else happen.

“What do I need to let go of to make room for Jesus?”

3. In John 14-17 Jesus talks about a joy that He gives that the world cannot give. Sometimes we are so busy that we don’t even realize the gifts that God gives us every day! We should look and wait in anticipation for God Himself. As well as the gifts He wants to give.

Luke 17:21 says that “the kingdom of God is in our midst.” We live in faith and trust. Mother Teresa often said “We are not called to be successful, we are called to be obedient.” Take time to listen to God’s voice. Mary heard what Gabriel said to her, even though it seemed impossible and preposterous. Mary said “yes” in faith – she was not certain, there was no Scripture promise for her, no rabbi to confirm what she heard. But she knew the voice of God and trusted.

“Take 5 minutes just to sit and listen. Is there an invitation that you sense from God to you personally? Pay attention. If you don’t sense an invitation, just sit and be with God in blessed silence.”

The last words in the Bible are “Come Lord Jesus.” We are the stable into which the Christ is born anew. Let’s keep our stable honest and humble and Christ will surely be born.

Say or sing quietly 4-5 times “Oh come let us adore Him.”

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