



## What are You Waiting For?

Advent is a time of waiting.  
We wait in hope, peace, joy and love.

*Sometimes our waiting is short lived like when the Amazon package arrives on my doorstep early, even before I had begun to wait. And sometimes our patience is tested as it seems that the waiting knows no end.*

The season of Advent, a season of waiting, is designed to cultivate our awareness of God's actions—past, present, and future. Waiting is one of those spiritual disciplines

that we as Christians exercise as we await Christ's second coming, but also as we wait for answers to our prayers and as we show patience toward individuals or circumstances that we wish would change but haven't yet. As the world around us rushes toward Christmas and demands instant gratification, the church pauses to experience the waiting of Advent.

### **November 28: (Communion) Active Waiting** *The Gift of HOPE will Rise Again*

*The Word:* Luke 12:35-40

*Felt Need:* The Christmas season is often associated with a fast-paced sense of hurry. Inevitably, we will feel the tension of impatient shoppers and hectic schedules.

*Know:* Advent cultivates the difficult discipline of waiting, a part of the Christian life. In light of this parable, we are called to wait patiently for Jesus' return—his second Advent—expectantly (not a passive waiting, but watching for God's activity) and faithfully (doing what God has called us to do in service while we wait).

*Desired Outcome:* Practice the discipline of waiting. Remember the stories from Scripture when God hears the prayers of his people and moves in compassion. It will require divinely cultivated patience. But hold on to the hope that God is up to the impossible.

### **December 5: Waiting for Light** *The Gift of PEACE will Conquer Fear*

*The Word:* John 1:1-18, 9:5

*Felt Need:* What were people waiting for in the Old Testament? They were waiting for someone to speak into the darkness and gloom and replace it with light.

*Know:* Light does several things: it shows reality (and therefore guides); it energizes (gives energy in place of lethargy); and it dispels darkness (light and darkness cannot coexist). Jesus says, "I am the light of the world" (Jn 9:5).

*Desired Outcome:* life, meaning, and purpose is not handmade, it is heaven made. Everything was created through him; nothing—not one thing!—came into being without him. What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by.

## **December 12: Waiting for Strength** *The Gift of JOY will Break Through*

*The Word:* Isaiah 40:1-11; HC #1 & 2 (Comfort)

*Felt Need:* Isaiah takes us into the courts of heaven where God speaks and angels sing. Rather than crying out judgment against His rebellious children, God is speaking words of comfort for His wounded children in exile.

*Know:* "What is your only comfort in life and death? That I, with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ..." HC 1 & 2 Christ not only pardons. He destroys the works of the devil, and He keeps us from falling. It is this keeping power of the Savior which affords so much comfort to God's people 'mid the testing's of faith.

*Desired Outcome:* Seize an intentional moment every day this week to reflect on God's blessings in your life. Thank others for being a source and channel of God's grace to you. Find three intentional ways to be a channel of grace to others. It will bring you joy as well as others.

## **December 19: Waiting to Be Satisfied** *The Gift of LOVE will Triumph Over All*

*The Word:* Joel 3:17-21

*Felt Need:* We can't help but sing out his praises as Christmas Day draws near. Everywhere we turn, songs flood the airwaves, rejoicing in the birth of Jesus. "Glory to God in the Highest!"

*Know:* Another thing people wait for is a sense of purpose or satisfaction in life. Each of us need to come and recognize (and confess) that you have no resources ("You who have no money, come, buy and eat!" (Isaiah 55:1)) and acknowledge that Jesus is the only way to life. You can't have one foot in the kingdom and one foot in the world. It's all or nothing.

*Desired Outcome:* Identify two ways that you can more intentionally worship Jesus with your everyday life as you wait for His return. Identify one person (or group) that needs to experience the love of Jesus. Follow the pattern of Jesus and reach beyond yourself to the outcasts in your community.

## **December 24: Christmas Eve "Love's Arrival"**

*Acknowledging Christ's arrival as the one in whom we find hope, peace, joy and love. With a variety of Scriptures and songs telling the message of the Prophets and the Christmas story, the first Advent, and the anticipation of Christ's return in the 2nd Advent.*