



advent 2019

DISCUSSION GUIDE

MAKE HIM ROOM / ADVENT 2019

Advent. Despite being good news of great joy, this can be one of the busiest, most stressful, and for some, the darkest seasons of the year. What we wish was a time of joy and peace, is instead filled with the noise and busyness of Christmas activities, the stress of strained relationships, or the heaviness of loss and grief. In the midst of this, God is inviting us to let our hearts and minds be tuned to the good news of Christmas. This Advent, we invite you to make room for Jesus; to make room for the impossible, for the unexpected, for worship, and for hope.

In addition to this discussion guide, Doxa has created a Daily Advent Devotional Guide to help you make room this Christmas. To find the daily guide, download the Doxa app from your app store on a phone or tablet or visit: doxa-church.com/guides.

PART 1: MAKE ROOM FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE

READ THE TEXT: Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came

together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”
(which means, God with us).

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Joseph’s plans are drastically changed by God. As he’s preparing for his wedding with Mary, he finds out she’s pregnant and yet claims she is still a virgin. Miraculously, her story is confirmed to Joseph by an angel who delivers the incredible news. When faced with the unexpected, Joseph responds with willingness and obedience. When his plans are changed by God, he immediately “does as the angel of the Lord commanded him” and became the earthly father of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

If you’re processing these questions as a missional community, take time to gauge whether these will best be answered in smaller groups or all together. Feel free to break into smaller “DNA-sized” groups if that’s helpful.

1. How do you normally respond to unexpected changes in your plans? What is your gut response? Anger? Despair? Frustration? When you respond that way, how do you picture God? Is he distant? Powerless? Cruel? Weak? Something

else? What does your response say about who you believe God to be in that moment?

2. Have you made space in your life to be ready for the unexpected change God will bring? Pastor Tim specifically talked about the gift of Sabbath to help us create space in our lives to make plans with God instead of submitting our plans to God. Have you subtracted from your life to create space and prepare for the unexpected God will bring? What do you need to say “no” to in order to be ready to say “yes” to God when he brings the unexpected?
3. The weekly rhythm of Sabbath is God’s designed way of life to help us give up control and learn to trust God with our lives...even when He does the unexpected. What keeps you from practicing Sabbath regularly? Lack of understanding of what it means or what it looks like? Lack of time? Overwhelmed by all you need to get done every week? What next step will you take to grow in this rhythm?
4. Are you debilitated by despair, shackled by shame, or poisoned by pride? *Take time to discuss specifically how the Advent reality is good news to those in despair, in shame, and full of pride.*
 - a. How does the Advent story give good news to those feeling despair this season? (*In Advent, God came to be with us and to save us! Even when all seems lost, the night will turn into morning...the light has come.*)
 - b. How does Advent bring good news to those living under the shame their sin or the sin of others has brought them this Christmas? (*Jesus came as a baby at Christmas, not to judge our sin, but to become our substitute and bear our sin so that we could have his righteous life. Through Him, we are forgiven!*)

c. What does the story of Advent say to those whose hearts are dangerously hardening with pride this season? (*Jesus humbled himself for you, taking on a human body and eventually dying on the cross, to forgive you for your pride.*)