



MAKE

HIM

ROOM

FOR HOPE

advent guide 2019

# A Daily Guide for Advent

**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. Our hope is that this guide will help you prepare your hearts for Christmas and create space for God to form you through the glorious story of Advent..

## Using This Guide

Each week is grounded in our central theme: "Make Him Room." Each day, set aside a little time to read the Scripture passage, engage with the reflection and question, and pray. At the end of the week, we will take time to reflect on what God has been showing us. On Fridays, we will engage in a prayer of examen, a tool Christians have used for centuries to ask God to help them see their own hearts more clearly. On Saturdays, we will confess our sin to Him and hear His assurance of pardon for us. Feel free to do this by yourself or with your family.

Don't feel stressed if you miss a day. Just pick up with the next scheduled day and ask the Spirit to use it how He knows is best in your heart and life.

We hope this helps you prepare room in your heart for what God will show you this Christmas.

Merry Christmas from the elders and staff of Doxa Church!

## Advent for the Family

Included at the beginning of each week is the "Advent for the Family" section that may be helpful for families with young kids. Here, you'll find a weekly devotional, recommended readings from Scripture and storybook Bibles, songs, family discussion questions, and prayers to pray together. Parents are invited to use this section to guide your kids through the advent season. You may choose to do this all at once or to spread it out over a few days. Please feel free to use however is helpful for your family.

## **ADVENT FOR THE FAMILY / WEEK 4**

God promised that the savior of the world would come as a baby and people waited a long time for him to be born. Hundreds of years passed and this baby had not been born yet. But God told Simeon that he would meet this baby in his life time, so he waited. One day the Holy Spirit told Simeon to go to the temple. While Simeon was there, Mary and Joseph brought baby Jesus to the temple to dedicate Him to God. The wait was over and Simeon met baby Jesus, the savior of the world! God kept His promise to Simeon and He kept His promise to bring the savior to the world. This season of advent, we can make room for God to do what He has promised and wait with expectancy for Him.

### **READ SCRIPTURE**

Luke 2:22-33

Younger Kids – The King of all Kings (pgs. 192-198) in *The Jesus Storybook Bible*  
Babies and Toddlers – Simeon and Anna Meet Baby Jesus (pgs. 282-285) in *The Beginner's Bible*

### **FAMILY ACTIVITY**

#### **Waiting for Skittles**

Supplies Needed: big skittle bags (or candy/food they enjoy)

Give each kid two skittles (or an equivalent treat) and tell them that they must wait to eat their skittles. You promise that their reward will be great. Then go on an adventure or do an activity that will really test their ability to wait to eat their treat. At the end, if they have been able to wait, take the skittles from them and give them an entire bag of skittles. God is always faithful to keep His promises and sometimes we have to wait. Just as Simeon waited to see Jesus, so we all wait for our Savior to make all things new.

### **FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Why is it hard to wait?
- What are you expecting God to do in your life that you are waiting for?
- How do you keep hope in the waiting?

### **SONG**

Joy to the World (by Bethel Music Kids) - [https://youtu.be/\\_yAfmw4mT4U](https://youtu.be/_yAfmw4mT4U)

### **PRAYER**

As you wait for Christmas, spend time expressing your faith and trust in God because He fulfills His promises.

# SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

## Make Room for Expectancy

### READ LUKE 2:22-33

And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.

### REFLECTION

We can spend our whole lives looking to see our longings fulfilled, our hopes realized, and our dreams come to fruition. Many of us have been looking to ourselves or to the world to satisfy these longings. We may have been waiting so long we've lost hope. Jesus comes to us in this season to be the fulfilment of what we long for – the hope we've been waiting for. In Him, our longings for life, joy, meaning, and peace find their answer. But this isn't the world's version of hope; a meager wish that may or may not be fulfilled. Biblical hope is "confident expectation" grounded in the faithfulness of our Father who always keeps His promises. We know our hope in him is not misplaced. We can look forward with expectancy and anticipation, knowing Jesus will not let us down.

*Do I expect God to keep his promises or  
do I feel like God has forgotten me?*

### PRAYER

Father, show me how I've lost hope and grow within me a longing and expectancy for Jesus in my life.

# MONDAY, DECEMBER 23

## Longing and Waiting

### READ LUKE 2:25

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

### REFLECTION

Waiting is central to the advent experience. Kids, and if we're honest adults, long for the sounds and smells (and presents!) of Christmas morning with eager anticipation. What a great picture of the kind of expectancy and waiting Simeon experienced. Simeon was longing for the Messiah, the consolation of Israel, to come. The Holy Spirit revealed to him that God would keep this promise. So, he waited. And...waited. He waited, fully expecting that he would see the Messiah before he died.

Meditate on the words of this Christmas hymn and hear both the longing and the expectancy (Immanuel means "God with us."):

*O come, O come, Immanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel.*

*What am I waiting or longing for?  
Do I see Jesus as the answer to my deepest longings?*

### PRAYER

Jesus, you see that I get distracted by my desires for the wrong things. Help me to wait and long for you.

# TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24

## Hope Fulfilled

### READ LUKE 2:29-32; PHILIPPIANS 3:20-21

“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

### REFLECTION

Faithful Israelites like Simeon were confidently expecting the coming of the One who would rescue them. And although we don't look forward to the birth of the Messiah like Simeon did, we do look forward to His return and can experience the same expectancy Simeon knew. Just as the hope and expectation of Simeon was fulfilled at the birth of Jesus, the first Advent) so our hope for the return of our King to make all things new will one day be fulfilled. The promises fulfilled at Christmas ground our hope that Jesus' future promise to return will come true. And like Paul we can say, “our citizenship is heaven and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

*Do I live in expectation this Advent that Jesus  
will return again to make all things new?*

### PRAYER

Jesus, help me to look for and expect your return to make all things new.

# WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25

## MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Merry Christmas! In Jesus, all of our longings find their ultimate fulfillment. We who have walked in darkness have seen a great light and God has increased our joy! Take a moment to meditate on these passages of promise and fulfillment.

### **READ ISAIAH 9:2-7, LUKE 2:29-32**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”

*Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts. May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

- A Christmas Prayer, Robert Louis Stevenson