

Prepare Him Room



Advent Guide
2024

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We all know what it is like to be with someone yet be unaware of their presence. Or be with someone and he/she be unaware of ours. Our screens and cell phones pull our gaze, the latest news story or music captures our ears, conflict and strife may have us physically in the same room, but we're on the lookout for an escape. To be truly present is more than being in the same physical room. To be present is to be aware, attentive, and to act.

As you enter this season of Advent, the weeks before the celebration of Jesus's birth, you are invited to be aware, attentive, and act. To be present to God and another's world. This is what Jesus did when he entered our world. He was aware and attentive, and he acted on behalf of those whose world he entered.

On the following pages, you will find daily Scripture and prompts to *pause, ponder, and pray*.

- **Pause.** Stop your physical movement and enter into silence with God. Find rest from your work as you trust God is with you.
- **Ponder.** Consider the Scripture for that day and what the Scripture says about God, about you, and about others.
- **Pray.** Talk to God about your pondering, about the Scripture, and how it is inviting you to act. Write out your prayer or say it aloud to God.

As you *pause, ponder, and pray*, my hope is that you will know and feel God's love and presence more and more. As you know God with you, may you be someone who takes the light and love of God to those around you this Advent and Christmas season.

Joyfully,

Laura

Welcoming Presence

Preparing for Jesus is preparing to welcome his presence. As we welcome Jesus into our lives (every part of our lives), we welcome his words, his light, his hope, and his ways. The Scriptures below are along the theme of “welcome”.

How will you welcome Jesus?

How will you welcome another?

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December 1

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 (NIV)

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 2

John 1:1-5 (NIV)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 3

Luke 1:76-79 (NIV)

“And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 4

John 8:12 (NIV)

“When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 5

Psalm 116:5-9 (NIV)

“The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The Lord protects the unwary; when I was brought low, he saved me. Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you. For you, Lord, have delivered me from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before the Lord in the land of the living.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 6

Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV)

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 7

Matthew 25:34-40 (NIV)

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’” Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’” The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

Strife and Salvation

There is great strife in the world we live in. Strife between peoples, people, and creation, people and God, even within each person. The strife is not without consequences. As we look to Jesus, the one who would enter our world to save it, we look for our salvation. We prepare him room to do a work in and through us. His salvation brings wholeness between people, with creation, with God, and within ourselves. Our salvation is for our souls and the good of our world. In Jesus, we find a God who saves and is with us.

-Pause. Stop your physical movement and enter into silence with God. Find rest from your work as you trust God is with you.

-Ponder. Consider the Scripture for that day and what the Scripture says about God, about you, and about others.

-Pray. Talk to God about your pondering, about the Scripture, and how it is inviting you to act. Write out your prayer or say it aloud to God.

December 8

Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 9

Isaiah 46:3-4 (NIV)

“Listen to me, you descendants of Jacob, all the remnant of the people of Israel, you whom I have upheld since your birth, and have carried since you were born. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 10

Psalms 86:1-7 (NIV)

“Hear me, Lord, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.
Guard my life, for I am faithful to you;
save your servant who trusts in you.
You are my God; have mercy on me, Lord,
for I call to you all day long.
Bring joy to your servant, Lord,
for I put my trust in you.
You, Lord, are forgiving and good,
abounding in love to all who call to you.
Hear my prayer, Lord;
listen to my cry for mercy.
When I am in distress, I call to you,
because you answer me.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 11

Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV)

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 12

Ephesians 1:7-9 (NIV)

“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 13

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV)

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 14

1 Corinthians 15:54-55 (NIV)

*“When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’
‘Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?’”*

Pause

Ponder

Pray

Goodness and Gratitude

We prepare him room through goodness, gratitude, and slowing down. As we slow down, we see. As we pause, we notice. God has surrounded us with goodness. God has given us gifts of grace. God has given us friends and family.

In these good gifts, we offer gratitude to God. Gratitude that doesn't minimize our griefs but walks alongside them, recognizing life is filled with gratefulness and grieving in one breath. We give thanks to a God who knows what it is to live in our world and provides what we need to live out goodness in it.

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-Ponder. Consider the Scripture for that day and what the Scripture says about God, about you, and about others.

-Pray. Talk to God about your pondering, about the Scripture, and how it is inviting you to act. Write out

December 15

Psalm 98 (NIV)

“Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; make music to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram’s horn—shout for joy before the Lord, the King. Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; let them sing before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 16

Psalm 9:7-9 (NIV)

“The Lord reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment. He rules the world in righteousness and judges the peoples with equity. The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 17

Psalm 23 (NIV)

“The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 18

Psalm 16:11 (NIV)

“You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 19

James 1:17 (NIV)

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 20

Psalm 96:11-13 (NIV)

“Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy. Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 21

Psalm 47:1-2 (NIV)

“Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. For the Lord Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

Love and Lordship

Two thousand years ago, Love came near. A love that chose to be with us. so much to be with us. A love that freely invites us to receive. Even though Jesus is Lord, he doesn't demand our love or affections, though he willingly and sacrificially offered his. May we prepare him room by receiving his love and lordship as we remember his first arrival and look towards his arrival to come.

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December 22

John 1:14 (NIV)

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

December 23

Matthew 1:23 (NIV)

“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’ (which means ‘God with us’).”

Pause

Ponder

Pray

Christmas Eve

December 24

1 John 4:7-19

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is made complete in us. This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us.

Pause

Ponder

Pray

Merry Christmas!

December 25

Luke 2:1-20 (NIV)

“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of

David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.”