



**Let's pray:**

**December 2022 - Advent**

How can we pray well as we head into the advent season?

 **home  
for good**



# Waiting well

**Before the celebration... the preparation.**

**Before Christmas... Advent.**

**Before the arrival of the long-awaited child... the prolonged period of hopeful expectation.**

For many of us, the weeks leading up to Christmas tend to be marked by frenzied activity and preparation: gifts to choose, buy and wrap; familiar seasonal recipes to revive; parties to plan; little shepherds, angels, Marys and Josephs to dress and applaud. It can be a busy time.

In our churches, we often talk about protecting the true meaning of Christmas. We're encouraged to ensure that the baby Jesus isn't lost amidst a sea of tinsel and the cacophony of dodgy festive music. But it's not always easy to keep our eyes on the manger. That's why Advent is so important.

Advent is a season of contemplation and preparation. It's a holy, precious time when we still our souls, ready our hearts and anticipate the miracle to come.

Advent enables us to wait well and prepare well so, when the time comes to welcome new life and to celebrate, we can participate fully.

At Advent, we wait.

As those who love God and seek to follow in the way of Jesus, waiting is part of our story.

The God we encounter in the pages of the Bible is an almighty, powerful God who, at times, acts swiftly and decisively to bring about change. But we also discover that our God is prepared to wait: to slow things down; to pause in His unfolding narrative of redemption and restoration. We see this in the story of Abraham and Sarah, whose wait for their promised child seems interminable. We see it in the story of Joseph, who spends years in prison before his opportunity arises to speak and to lead. Moses, Caleb and Joseph lead God's people for forty years of wilderness wanderings. David is anointed as king as a young man, but it's many years before he takes up the throne.

And then there's Luke 3:23a – a short, half-verse that was incredibly significant for me during a prolonged period of waiting and uncertainty in my late 20s and early 30s. The verse reads:

**'Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry.'**

Have you ever been struck by how old Jesus was when he was baptised and set out on his mission of teaching, preaching and healing? Have you ever wondered why God waited so long? We don't know much about Jesus' life between the age of 12 and 30, but we can surmise that the many years of waiting and preparation were somehow significant.

**Our God waits. He invites us to wait with Him and to experience His presence and stillness in our midst. He calls us to reflect on our past and to recognise His faithful companionship. He invites us to anticipate our future, with hope and confidence. But he urges us to pause, to settle our souls and to inhale eternity: to know Him more fully; to experience His love more deeply. God's kingdom come... in us... today.**

As November fades and December begins, our thoughts will inevitably be directed towards Christmas and the festivities to come. But before we celebrate, let us prepare our hearts and minds. May we each embrace the gift that is Advent and actively enter into these weeks of hopeful anticipation and quiet encounter with God. And may we find meaning in the waiting.





# Advent Prayer Activities

## Be still and know

- Throughout Advent, why not commit yourself to daily or regular moments of silence and stillness (if this option is available to you)? Take time to be still and know that He is God and that He is with you. Perhaps you could light an Advent candle or other candle as you wait on God. No agenda, just 5-10 minutes of quiet contemplation and allowing yourself to be held by God.

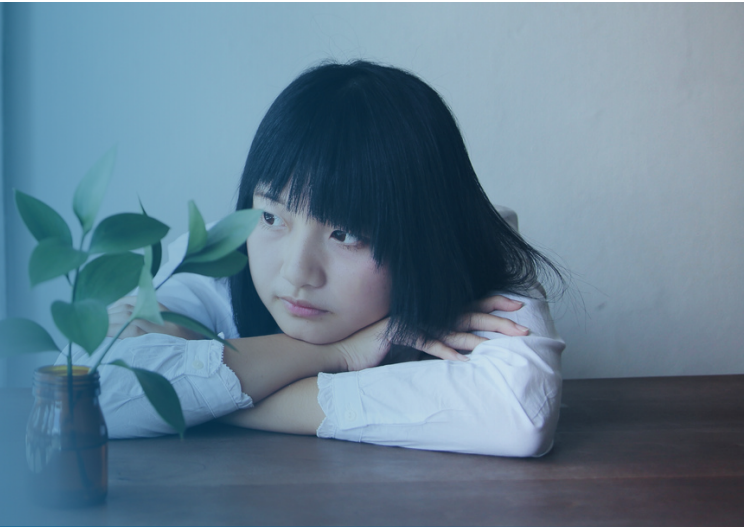
## Pray a Psalm

- Slowly read through Psalm 27, a cyclical prayer that opens with praise of God then moves to lament and uncertainty before returning to praise. This Psalm can help us to wait prayerfully and honestly and finishes with an exhortation to 'be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.'

## Advent Calendars

- An Advent calendar isn't just about small chocolates for children – it can be a way to help us journey well through this season of waiting and preparation. Why not download or draw a blank advent calendar template and use it draw or note something each day as you wait and reflect. You could include things that you are thankful for from your past, things that you are hoping for in the future, or something that you want to cling to from each day (eg. a promise from God, a commitment you are making as you prepare for Christmas).

## Let's pray for those who wait



- Pray for children who are waiting: waiting for a place of safety and belonging, waiting for clarity about what happens next, waiting to be seen, heard and understood.
- Pray for individuals and couples who are waiting: waiting for their assessment process to start or resolve; waiting to be matched with a child or children; waiting for the vital inputs and support that they know their children need; waiting for some compassion, care and support for them and their family.
- Pray for churches who are waiting: waiting to respond to God's call to action; waiting to consider how best to play their part in finding homes for children who need them.



# Respond

## **Prepare to welcome**

This Advent, why not consider starting a journey that may lead to welcoming a child into your home through fostering, adoption or supported lodgings for teenagers? We'd love to help you explore those first steps and walk beside you.

## **Prepare to care**

This Advent, why not think about how you – and your church – can step up to care more actively for those in your congregation and community who provide homes for children who aren't able to live with their birth families. Home for Good can offer advice and suggestions to help you on your way.

## **Prepare to support**

This Advent, why not stand with Home for Good and support our vision of finding a home for every child who needs one – through your prayers and your giving? We'd love you to pray for us in this run up to Christmas. We'd love you to make a one-off donation or to set up regular giving. We'd love you to invest spiritually and financially in this vital, kingdom work.

**Home for Good is prepared to make a difference in the lives of children who are waiting. We're thankful to the many churches and individuals who are already a big part of this story. But we'd love to see this story grow. Are you prepared to join us?**