





COMMUNITY GUIDE

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WEEKLY APPLICATION

REMIND: “We too are called to withdraw at certain intervals into deeper silence and aloneness with God, together as a community as well as personally; to be alone with God – not with books, thoughts, and memories but completely stripped of everything – to dwell lovingly in God’s presence, silent, empty, expectant, and motionless. We cannot find God in noise or agitation.” - Mother Teresa

OVERVIEW

PEACE

The consumerism, romanticism, and hallmark-ness of our Christmas season can often leave us feeling less than fulfilled. We, in light of the “season”, often force ourselves to live outside of the present realities in favor of performing a merry or joyful Christmas. This does violence to our souls. It prevents us from moving through pain in favor of moving around it. As we disconnect from ourselves, whether by platitudes or coping mechanisms, we reinforce the need to perform a “spirit of Christmas.” The advent is an invitation to be real and human. It is an invitation to feel the full range of complex and conflicting feelings that may come and, in moving through them, discover a peace that goes deeper than anything we can manufacture. The advent is an invitation to be real and human. As Jesus comes, he doesn’t erase the stories of our past, nor does he immediately reveal where everything is going. Instead, he invites us to hold onto an everlasting peace found only in him. An invitation to live as though a better and good world is yet to come, even when all hope seems silent. Jesus wants to give you peace, but it only comes when you journey with him through the emotions and struggles that are robbing you of peace.

READ: Psalm 4

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How are you feeling, like really feeling, as you move toward Christmas? Pay attention to the full range of what is in you (joy, pain, stress, numbness, and all) and bring those feelings to God in honest prayer.
2. How does it feel to be honest with God, how does God respond to you?
3. Set a timer for 5-10 minutes and be silent before God. The goal isn’t to hear or accomplish anything, but to simply practice being in God’s presence. As we are, not as we pretend to be. May being in God’s presence bring you peace.
4. Spend a few minutes praying over your family, friends, or spouse.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I want to make space to allow your Holy Spirit to help me see myself as you see me. Help me to not run from my pain or uncomfortable emotions but remind me of your presence in the middle of it. As I pursue peace, may I not seek it in the avoidance of the uncomfortable or the pleasure of temporary possessions, but may I find it in you. Amen.

IN THIS TOGETHER!