

## A Life Group Meditation for Advent

### 'O Come O Come Emmanuel'

November 2021

***NB A number of props are needed for this session, which the leader will need to organise beforehand. Also, it might be worthwhile printing off some copies of this session. Each person will need a copy of the words of the hymn 'O come, O come, Emmanuel'.***

*Before you begin it might also be an idea to allocate Bible readings to different people in the group so they are ready to read at the appropriate time. The times of reflection are pauses for silence.*

### Light a Candle

Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world'.

The name Advent comes from the Latin word 'adventus', meaning 'coming'.

Left to our own devices, the human race is in real trouble, yet Advent gives us hope – it reminds us of the fact that help is on the way.

In Advent, there is a sense of journeying from darkness to light – to the light that is Christ:

Jesus who has come, and who will come again.

Read: Genesis 1:3-5; Exodus 13:20-22; Job 24:13-17; Psalm 43:3-4; Isaiah 60:1; John 1:1-5.

### Reflect on:

- how much we need the light of Christ in today's world
- the ways in which the light of Christ offers us illumination, warmth, and life.

**Opening Prayer:** invite Jesus, the light of the world, to lead you in your meditation this evening.

The hymn 'O come, O come, Emmanuel' is well known, and tells us parts of God's salvation story in rich biblical imagery. Originally written in Latin, the modern version we use was translated into English in the nineteenth century. Listen to a recording of the hymn as you meditate on the words which you will find on the last page.

Depending on the musical taste of your group, here are some suggestions you can find online:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iO7ySn-Swwc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01BcaggibDw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UH7asSGxAxA>



### Reflecting on the meaning of the different verses:

**v1** This first verse expresses our need of God's help.

It is as if we are shut out in a place of exile and unable to access light and hope.

This God, Emmanuel, 'ransoms us'. To ransom means to 'buy back'. It is the image of the market place when slaves were bought at a price. When Jesus comes into our lives he 'ransoms' us from the Evil one – he 'buys us back'; he pays the price for our freedom.

Take a piece of string and tie your ankles together to remind you what it can be like for captives and prisoners.

Then cut yourself, or your neighbour, free with a pair of scissors.

#### Reflect on:

- how it felt to be 'in chains'
- what it feels like to be free.

Read Mark 10:45 alongside Jesus' promise in John 10:10, and give thanks that on the cross he paid your ransom.



**v2** In this verse, Jesse is the father of King David. (See Ruth 4:17, 20)

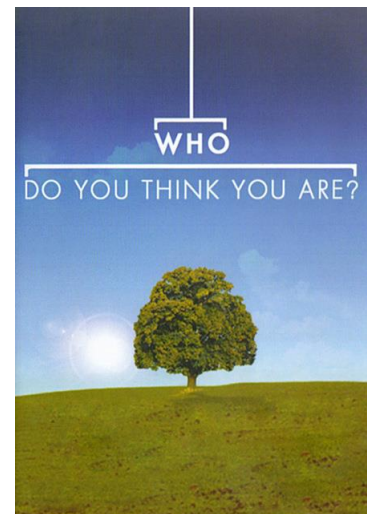
'The rod of Jesse' refers to his family line.

Jesus is a descendant of David (Luke 1:31-33), and he is a type of King David - that is, on his good days, he gives us a foretaste of what the Messiah will be like: 'great David's greater son', as it says in the hymn, 'Hail to the Lord's anointed'.

Remembering that Jesus was part of a human family,

#### Reflect on your own family tree:

- give thanks for the good things
- bring to God the things that could be better.



**v3** 'Dayspring' means the dawn of a new day. In this verse, Jesus comes to bring light in the darkness, and life where previously there has been death.

Read Isaiah 9:1-7.

In the room where you are sitting, switch off the lights. Allow your eyes to become accustomed to the darkness. Now switch on the lights again and allow the room to be flooded with light.

**Reflect on:**

- how it feels when 'the gloomy clouds of night' are dispersed.
- how have you known the light of Christ at work in your life today?



**v4** Take a key and turn it over in your hand.

Consider its purpose, and its potential.

Read Isaiah 22:20-22 and Revelation 3:7.

What is the power of the Key of David?

**Reflect on:**

- what doors in your life would like to see opened and why?
- ask for God's help in opening up the direction of your journey to 'our heavenly home'.



**v5** In verse 5, Adonai is one of the Hebrew words for God, and means 'Lord'.

The verse reminds us that, through Moses, the Lord God gave his people the Law on Mount Sinai. This included the Ten Commandments as part of a whole lifestyle that was to bring glory to God in every aspect of life. The whole of life is meant to be lived under the Lordship of Christ.

Take out your diary, and

**Reflect on:**

- your engagements – how might you live your life more aware that Jesus is your Lord?
- commit your time to him for this season of Advent.  
Do you need to adjust any priorities?



### **And Finally: 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel'**

This whole song expresses a heartfelt desire that Emmanuel will indeed come and dwell with us. Are you longing to see more of Jesus in your life today? Pray that God will increase our desire for him. And rejoice that he keeps his promises – he will come to us.

Look up the last two verses in the Bible – Revelation 22:20-21.

If you have a singer in your group, perhaps they could close with these words, written to the same tune as our hymn, from Jim Cotter's book, 'Expectant: Verses for Advent'.

'O come, O come, Emmanuel,

God-with-us here and now to dwell,

at one with our humanity,

in whom we find our destiny.

Rejoice! Rejoice! The human face of God

with us shall interlace'

**Amen.**

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here,  
Until the Son of God appear.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free  
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
From depths of hell Thy people save,  
And give them victory o'er the grave.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, thou Dayspring, from on high,  
And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, thou Key of David, come  
And open wide our heavenly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, Adonai, Lord of might,  
Who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,  
In ancient times didst give the law  
In cloud and majesty and awe.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*