**Advent Waiting – Life Group Reflection week 1**

**‘Waiting on God – let Him encounter you’**

During Advent we are going to be focussing on ‘waiting on God’ and reflect particularly on the verses that we will be using as a focus each week in our Advent Prayer, rather than the sermons topics. Over these sessions we encourage you not to spend too much time discussing and answering questions’ but to leave plenty of time of practising ‘waiting’ together and giving space for God to encounter us.

**Opening Prayer**

Holy Spirit of God, we wait for you.
Speak to us with your still small voice of calm.
Renew our strength,
restore our faith,
refresh our vision.
Help us to wait for you
through these weeks of Advent,
to make space,
to welcome the Word made flesh,
Jesus the child who is to come.
Amen.

**Psalm 130:5-8**

*“I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.*

*Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.”*

* **Read the whole of Psalm 130. What is the context of this psalm? What is the psalmist particularly waiting for (v4)?**
* **What do you think it means to ‘wait for the Lord’?**
* **What does it mean to wait with our ‘whole being’? What does that say to you?**
* **The word for ‘waiting’ in the Hebrew has the sense of ‘hopeful waiting in eager expectation’ as the watchmen did for the morning. What does this illustration say to us? Why can we wait with eager expectation?**
* **How might you practically ‘wait with the whole of your being’ this Advent?**

**Reflection:**

We particularly encourage you to practise ‘waiting on God’ this week with no particular agenda other than encountering Him.

You might like to light a candle in the middle of the room as you reflect.

**Play** Wait For You, by Luke Hellebronth, Nikki Fletcher, and Tim Hughes. (Worship Central)
[***https://youtu.be/Iah\_Ylmr8Oo***](https://standrewsandallsaints.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=c8b8fa35c0e2115a102cd1564&id=0ac68bf935&e=ad09cb53f3)

*Read out this invitation…*

*“Come, and however feeble you feel, just wait in His presence. As a feeble, sickly invalid is brought out into the sunshine to let its warmth go through him, come with all that is dark and cold in you into the sunshine of God’s holy, omnipotent love, and sit and wait there, with the one thought: Here I am, in the sunshine of His love. As the sun does its work in the weak one who seeks its rays, God will do His work in you. Oh, do trust Him fully. “Wait on the Lord! Be strong, and let your heart take courage! Yea, wait thou on the Lord!”*

(Andrew Murray, Waiting On God: Daily Messages for a Month)

Have a time of silence to simply be in God’s presence. You may sense God speaking to you, you may not, but rest in his presence and simply ‘be’.

After a time of silence you might like to share any reflections together and pray for each other.

**Final Advent Prayer**

*Father in this season of Advent we prepare our hearts for your coming.*

*You are the vine, we are the branches.*

*Come and tend us, prune us, clean us.*

*Discard in us everything that does not bear fruit,*

*Nourish in us everything that bears much fruit.*

*As we celebrate your coming as a vulnerable baby*

*Our hearts await your glorious return as the eternal King.*

*Nurture in us expectant hearts, O Lord.*

*Cultivate in us a deep longing for more of you.*

*Until that Day when you burst through the heavens,*

*And flood our horizons with your glorious splendour.*

*For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, throughout all ages and generations. Amen.*

**Some Questions in our Waiting:**

Father God, what do you want to do in me this Advent?

Father God, show me what you want me to pray for our church.

Show me where you are at work amongst us now?

Is there something you want to encourage us in?

Is there anything you want us to change? Or something new you are calling us too?

Who are you calling us to be and what are you calling us to be passionate about in this season?

How are you calling us to serve and be a blessing to our community (and other local churches) in this season?

Is there something you want to prepare us for?

Is there something you want to reveal to us about your character?

**Life Group Leaders – please encourage members of your group to share anything they feel God is saying, either within the group or afterwards. Please then make sure that this is passed on to one of the Church Leadership Team.**