

DISCUSSION GUIDE

· In The Waiting: An Advent Series ·



November 27 2022

ADVENT: THE WAITING HOPE

Welcome to the Discussion Guide - designed to help you think more deeply about the sermon topic as you engage with others through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and real-life application.

➤ CONVERSATION STARTERS

What is your favorite Christmas song?

What makes that song so special to you?

➤ EXPLORATION

This week we begin the season of Advent. This is a celebration that traditionally spans the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. The word "Advent" means "the arrival". This arrival we celebrate at Christmas points us to the birth of Jesus Christ. For Christ followers, it is a time of expectation and anticipation, but it is also a time for reimagining.

What is something good in your life that you had to wait for?

The Christmas story is a great example of something that God's people had to wait for, and we are still waiting for the complete fulfillment of all that was made possible by the birth of Jesus Christ over 2000 years ago.

Our theme for Advent this week is HOPE!

Romans 15:1-4 (read aloud)

The bible has important instructions for us as we learn how to fight to hold on to hope. In this passage we note that these words are directed to a group, not an individual. This is one of the reasons that we value our relationships, we need each other to live out what is taught in the scriptures.

What is something difficult you have been through that was made easier by the support and encouragement of someone else?

God Gives: Endurance to Have Hope

Endurance = patience, steadfastness, constancy

Hebrews 6:19 (read aloud)

God Gives: Encouragement to Hold on to Hope

Encouragement = consolation, comfort or refreshment
Hope = expectation of good, joyful and confident

Describe a time when you were able to give hope to someone who was struggling. How did you extend hope in that situation?

Romans 15:5 (read aloud)

This powerful prayer that Paul prayed helps us understand that true endurance and encouragement comes from God. We have access to this gift when we come together to glorify God with one heart and mind.

God Gives: Empowerment to Overflow with Hope

We cannot overflow with hope until we have first been filled with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13 (read aloud)

The Holy Spirit is the source, the power and the strength we need to face the difficulties of life. We cannot do this on our own.

Enemies of Biblical Hope

- Expectations out of alignment
- Listening to the wrong voices
- Looking to inadequate sources
- Holding on to promises God never gave
- Underestimating the timing of things

What are some examples you have seen or experienced where these enemies of biblical hope are a distraction from true hope?

The Reverend, Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. once said,

“We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”

What is something you are hoping for that only God can provide?

Share how you hold on to hope as you wait for God to answer your prayer.

Our vision here at Hillside Community Church is to see God’s hope transform our cities one story at a time. We truly believe that women and men, boys and girls can discover the all surpassing, ever-sustaining greatness of God’s hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

You are an important part of seeing that vision come to pass. Each time you share your faith through words of hope and encouragement, you are working with the Holy Spirit to share God’s love with the people around you.

Take some time to think and pray about who might need some fresh hope in this season. Invite the Holy Spirit to

give you the opportunity to share the hope you have in Jesus with them.

➤ TAKE AWAY

Over this next week, take some time to pray this Advent Prayer, for yourself and for the people around you.

God of hope, thank you for the amazing gift of your son, Jesus! May the hope of Christ rise in our lives again today.

Jesus, thank you for your birth, life and sacrificial death for us. We long for your return and for you to make all things new.

Spirit of God, please grant us Your endurance and encouragement. Fill us again today, may our lives overflow with your hope. ~AMEN

Another way you can respond to this message of hope is to be generous. There are so many ways you can extend hope to those around you.

One very practical way you can share hope is to bring a new, unwrapped toy or \$25 gift card to church next week as we support Warrior For Children, an organization that helps provide resources for kids who are navigating trauma. In this small way, you can share hope with children who need to know that they are loved!