

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE — ADVENT WEEK 1: LONGING

Passages: *Isaiah 64:1–5; Psalm 130; Matthew 2:10–11*

1. Opening Question (Non-Spiritual, Relational)

Share a story of a time you were anxiously waiting for something or someone—maybe a child returning home, a phone call, a medical result, or even someone finding you at a crowded event.

- a. **What did those minutes feel like?**
- b. How did your emotions shift when the waiting ended?

2. Read Scripture Together

- a. **Isaiah 64:1–4**
- b. **Psalm 130**
- c. **Matthew 2:10–11**

3. Comprehension — Understanding the Text

a. Isaiah 64

- i. What is Isaiah asking God to do in verse 1?
- ii. What situation is Isaiah responding to? What is unraveling in Israel's world?
- iii. How does Isaiah describe God's character in verses 4–5?

b. Psalm 130

- i. What feelings or spiritual posture do you sense in verses 1–4?
- ii. Why does the psalmist compare himself to a watchman waiting for morning?
- iii. What hope anchors the psalmist?

c. Matthew 2:10–11

- i. How did the Magi respond when they saw the star?
- ii. What did they do when they finally encountered Jesus?

4. Meaning — Exploring the Theme of Longing

a. Longing in Israel

- i. Why is longing such an important part of Israel's spiritual history?
- ii. How did Isaiah teach God's people to hold both fierce longing *and* steady hope at the same time?

b. Longing in Our World Today

- i. Where do you see longing in our culture—especially here in the San Ramon Valley?
- ii. Which of the longings described in the sermon (rest, identity, healing, meaning, belonging) resonate most with you?

c. Longing in Your Life

- i. Where do you personally feel the ache of “the not yet”?
- ii. How does Psalm 130 give you language for your own prayers and confession?

5. Moving Longing Toward Adoration

- a. Re-read Matthew 2:10–11.
- b. **The Magi teach us four movements of adoration: joy awakened, posture of humility, receiving before giving, and allowing longing to become worship.**
- c. **Choose One to answer:**
 - i. **Joy Awakened:** Where have you recently sensed the Spirit awakening joy or drawing your attention toward Jesus?
 - ii. **Posture Over Performance:** What area of life is God calling you to “bow the heart”—to surrender instead of striving?
 - iii. **Receiving Before Giving:** What is one thing you need to receive from Jesus this Advent?
 - iv. **Longing to Encounter:** How might you turn your longing into an actual encounter with Christ this season?

6. Prayer