

# THE NEST

A CCS Resource for Discipleship in the Home

## Advent Reflection Part 1

### A CHORUS OF MOURNING

The first chord of advent is always a *minor*.

Before there is a chorus of angels there is a chorus of people crying out to God. In advent, we echo the cries of captivity in Egypt and the longing of deliverance: *“During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob”* (Exodus 2:23-24).

I know grief isn't comfortable. We're not always sure what do it with it entirely - especially around something like Christmas. Isn't Christmas supposed to be filled with “Fa la la” and “Jingle Bells”?

What if, instead, we acknowledged that the first line in the chorus of Advent is: *It's not the way it's supposed to be.*

Instead of picture perfect Christmas cards and social posts, what if we find comfort in the reality that Christmas begins in the cry of the desperate.

The prophecy doesn't start with, “For unto us a child is born . . .” the prophecy of Christmas begins, “The people who walked in darkness . . .”

Darkness.



## Advent Prayer:

God of hope,  
who brought love  
into this world,  
be the love  
that dwells between us.

God of hope,  
who brought peace  
into this world,  
be the peace  
that dwells between us.

God of hope,  
who brought joy  
into this world,  
be the joy  
that dwells between us.

God of hope,  
the rock we stand upon,  
be the centre,  
the focus of our lives always,  
and particularly this  
Advent time.

I've come to understand that complete darkness is disorienting.

In true and utter darkness, you can't see anything and you lose your bearings. You can't know if there is anything or anyone around you, you don't know which way to move and it is debilitating. You are frightened not by the darkness itself but by the destabilizing sensation of unawareness.

There is darkness in the experience of the people of Israel in Egypt. Again when they are in exile. There is darkness for 400 years of silence from God; in their oppressive experience under Roman rule. There is darkness on a more personal level as we listen into Zechariah's longing.



Then, a **flicker**. This is the power of the first Advent candle.

From darkness to light.

From disorientation to awareness.

From destabilization to a step of assurance.

From despair to hope.

In the midst of darkness, even just the smallest candle light brings comfort. The first hope of Christmas is that God hears you. God sees you. God knows.

The good news? He is not repelled by the dark. He is not disgusted or repulsed by our despair. He does not look away or retract His hand from us.

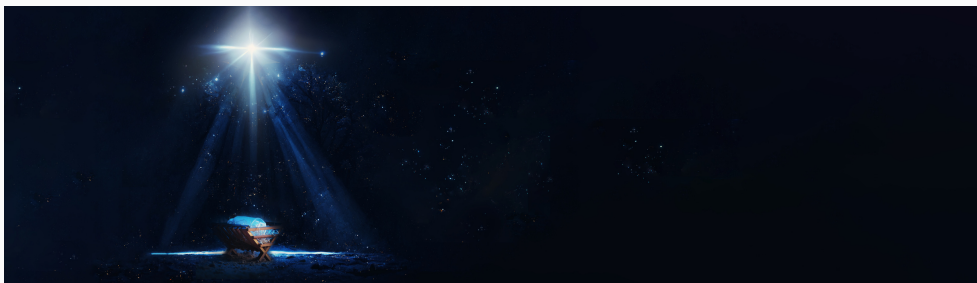
Instead, He moves in. His light and love invades the darkness. The comfort of advent is the light of presence. God is here. *Immanuel*.

In this first weekend of Advent, don't skip to "Joy to the World". Instead join the chorus of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel".

Where do you need God to show up in your life? Where do you need God to bring his light into your family? How might we, beneath the veneer of our Christmas cards and social posts of perfectly lit Christmas trees, echo the cry of Israel for deliverance? Where in our hearts do we join with the desperate prayers of Zechariah and Elizabeth in their broken dreams and disappointment?

Our cry from the darkness: *It's not the way it's supposed to be.*

The angel chorus from the heavens: *God is here to make all things new.*



## Resource for the shelf:

