

# Finding Time this Christmas

## December/Advent 2022 (27 Nov - 31 Dec)



There are few things as precious as quality time with those who love us. The Incarnation, Jesus coming to live amongst us and then dwelling in our hearts, is the ultimate in quality time! Jesus, the Word at the beginning of the universe, choosing to spend time with us, getting to know us, caring for us.

With this winter being a difficult one for many with the rising costs of living and energy we are all having to evaluate what is important. So we decided this Advent we should focus on quality time. The quality time Jesus finds for us and the quality time we find with one another. Forget the wrapping paper, the tinsel, the recipes, the to-do lists — what shines brightest is the opportunity to take time together. Time with Jesus and with one another matters more than any decoration or recipe or present.

Of the 33 odd years of Jesus's earthly life he only spent the last few years in active public ministry, he spent the decades before that spending time with us. Jesus could have materialised as a thirty-something firebrand, but he didn't. He was born a baby to live a real flesh and blood human life. He took his time with us. We should take our time with him.

So let's find time this Christmas. Time with Jesus, time with those we love, time with those who need us. Christmas can be an insular time where we focus on our nearest and dearest but our calling from Jesus invites us to look outwards too! What really matters, what is really important? Let's think about how we spend our time? What are we going to find time for this Christmas?

**SETTING THE SCENE:** This month we are continuing to experiment with having a visual/ multi-sensory motif for each week. The idea is that this word provides an additional focus point for preparing services or multimedia from the material. It is not intended to be restrictive and is simply a suggestion to combine with the theme prompts to inspire creativity.

**SEEDS TO SOW:** Additional suggestions to facilitate varied ways of responding to the readings and sub-themes for the month. These are open-ended and optional and are designed especially for people creating worship resources in response to the material. Perhaps if you are using this material as a group you could use these prompts to inspire a time of prayer, or drawing, or creative writing? They are a short and sweet, simply a starting off place for you and your imagination. Tailor and develop as suits your group.

*Each week of the five week theme runs Sunday-Saturday and has its own subtheme, which contains daily Bible readings and prompts for thought.*

# Finding time for peace this Christmas (27 November)

What are we making time for this Christmas? Will we make time to make peace? Because peace... can take a lot of time. It's hard won and needs to be cherished and sustained. What can we do to find time for peace this Advent? Peace within ourselves, in our communities and across the world. Peace isn't just a state, it's a skill, something we learn to craft and graft at. How are we going to make peace?

## SETTING THE SCENE: WORKSHOP

### SEEDS TO SOW: 'CRAFTING' PEACE

1. Isaiah 2: 1-5
  2. Psalm 122
  3. Romans 13:  
11-14
  4. Matthew 24:  
42-44
  5. Psalm 4
  6. 2 Corinthians 4:  
1-15
  7. Ephesians 2:  
1-10
1. **Finding time for peace this Christmas.** How can we use our time to make ploughshares and pruning hooks?
  2. **Finding time for peace within.** How can we find time to cultivate peace within ourselves. And how can we help others find peace within?
  3. **Finding time for the armour of light!** How can we 'put on' the Lord Jesus Christ this morning?
  4. **Finding time to be awake.** When it comes to being peacemakers are we sometimes asleep on the job?
  5. **Finding time to be asleep.** May all find safe and peaceful places to sleep this winter.
  6. **Finding time to make this Christmas.** How can this picture of treasure stored in clay jars inspire us to make something this Christmas. Something humble that points to God's amazing peace...
  7. **Finding time for repair this Christmas.** If we are God's craftsmanship God can help us with our maintenance and repairs!

# Finding time for stillness this Christmas (4 December)

Jesus is with us when we sing it out on a Sunday but he's also when we slog it out on a Monday. Jesus is with us as we pray on a Tuesday but also when we party on a Saturday. Jesus is with us when we're trying to concentrate at Bible study on a Wednesday but also on our mad dash to the shops on a Friday trying to stretch the budget that bit further. And Jesus is with us in the midst of an ordinary Thursday when we're simply just sitting quietly, being with him.

SETTING THE SCENE: **CUPPA**

SEEDS TO SOW: **PUTTING JESUS INTO OUR SCHEDULES**

1. Isaiah 11: 1-10
  2. Romans 15: 4-13
  3. Matthew 6: 25-34
  4. Psalm 46
  5. Philippians 4: 1-3
  6. Philippians 4: 4-7
  7. Philippians 4: 8-9
1. **Finding time to be this Christmas.** Like a lion from this vision just chilling, eating straw... A disruptive picture of harmony.
  2. **Finding time to abound in hope!** When was the last time you 'abounded' in something?! Reflecting on the links between welcome, joy, peace and hope.
  3. **Finding time for today.** The commercial, festive, and culinary drives around Christmas can make it hard to live in the moment. Today what can we simplify, to simply be with Jesus?
  4. **Finding time to be still and know God.** Taking time to behold the works of the Lord.
  5. **Finding time to forgive this Christmas.** Healing and mending with grace.
  6. **Finding time for mystery this Christmas.** A peace which surpasses all understanding guards our hearts! Taking a moment of stillness to notice this mystery.
  7. **Finding time for good things this Christmas.** Put down the shopping list, put down the decorations, put down the fork and take some time to slow down with God and notice true, honourable, just, pleasing and commendable things!

# Finding time to share the love this Christmas (11 December)

Are we finding time to *share* our time? Are we making time to share with those who need us? Do we just talk about Good News and reflect on Good News and sing about it or are we actually good news to people who know us? How can we be a part of caring and restoration this Christmas, waiting on the Lord.

SETTING THE SCENE: **A SERVING TRAY**

SEEDS TO SOW: **REFLECT, HOW CAN WE WAIT ON OTHERS THIS CHRISTMAS?**

1. Isaiah 35: 1-10
  2. Psalm 146: 5-10
  3. Luke 1: 46-55
  4. James 5: 7-10
  5. Matthew 11: 2-11
  6. Isaiah 40: 27-31
  7. Ephesians 4: 25-32
1. **Finding time to blossom.** Where can you bring new life this Christmas and where, through the strength of God, can you BE new life this Christmas?
  2. **Finding time for restoration.** How and where can we bring restoration this Christmas?
  3. **Finding time to fill the hungry with good things!** We often think about how to fill *ourselves* with good things at Christmas, but Mary's words inspire us to feed the hungry!
  4. **Finding time to wait this Christmas.** To wait for God and to wait on one another.
  5. **Finding time for good news.** Is Jesus the real deal? See the good news!
  6. **Finding time to rise.** Waiting on the Lord for a lift!
  7. **Finding time to care this Christmas.** Are our hearts tender enough this Advent?

# Finding time to make room this Christmas (18 December)

We are called to be saints, to live into the story of hope of Jesus coming among us. How can we find time to live up to our calling this Christmas? Christmas has often become an excuse to put ourselves and our loved ones first. But how can we undermine that? The first Christmas was makeshift, far from home and improvised on the fringe. The events of the day weren't carefully planned, timetabled and organised. It was rustic, it was strange, it was beautiful. Somehow everybody made room. Mary and Joseph fulfilled their calling, they persevered in that pocket of room. How can we follow their example this Christmas? Saints make peace, make hope, and make room!

SETTING THE SCENE: **STABLE**

SEEDS TO SOW: **SURPRISED BY THE BEAUTIFUL**

1. Isaiah 7: 10-16
  2. Psalm 80
  3. Romans 1: 1-7
  4. Matthew 1: 18-25
  5. Isaiah 52: 7-10
  6. Luke 2: 1-7
  7. Hebrews 1: 1-12  
(Christmas Eve)
1. **Finding time for Immanuel.** Being with God.
  2. **Finding time for the shining face of God.** A stirring psalm with haunting imagery.
  3. **Finding time to be called to be saints!** Grace and peace to you!
  4. **Finding time for grace.** Joseph's turmoil and God's reassurance.
  5. **Finding time for beautiful feet...** How can we be messengers of peace today?
  6. **Finding time to make room this Christmas.** Room was made amongst humanity for God. Room was made in a busy Bethlehem. Room was made in the straw. Where are we making room this Christmas?
  7. **Finding time for Jesus.** Here we are, the day before, awaiting the exact imprint of God's very being!

# Finding time for hallelujahs this Christmas (25 December)

From a shepherd on a hillside, to a space traveller crying out in the wonder of the cosmos, to you and me kneeling before the Lord — we can find time to mumble, shout, whisper, whoop, declare, or softly say... a hallelujah!

SETTING THE SCENE: **A FIELD UNDER A STARRY SKY**

SEEDS TO SOW: **HOW MANY TYPES OF 'HALLELUJAH' CAN YOU THINK OF?**

- 1. Luke 2: 8-20**  
(Christmas Day)
  - 1. Finding time for shepherds.** Who did the angels make time for on the first Christmas? Rulers? Important dignitaries? Church leaders? Leading artists? Local heroes? Winners of a talent competition? No. Shepherds, they made time for shepherds.
- 2. Isaiah 9: 2-7** (Boxing Day)
  - 2. Finding time to break yokes.** How can we side with God this Christmas?
- 3. Psalm 96**
  - 3. Finding time to tremble this Christmas.** We don't tremble in abject terror of God, we tremble in anticipation and wonder, respecting the majesty of the enormity of the God who loves us and has achieved all this for us.
- 4. John 1: 1-14**
  - 4. Finding time for the cosmic. Imagine you're an astronaut floating up there...** Making room for metaphysics amidst the tinsel...
- 5. Matthew 6: 19-21**
  - 5. Finding time to give.** Are we stockpiling treasure or stockpiling grace?
- 6. Isaiah 43: 18-19**
  - 6. Finding time for change.** As one year draws to a close and we anticipate another, are we attentive to the new things God is doing?
- 7. Romans 8: 12-17**  
(Hogmanay)
  - 7. Finding time for a Hogmanay Hallelujah!** We turn to Abba, Father, and blast out a Hogmanay Hallelujah!