

December Family Devotional

“Waiting in the silence” Week of December 15-21

Sometime during the week, work through the readings and questions below (with family or friends if possible). Our hope is that this will help you grow in anticipation for what Christmas is meant to be.

Following the exile in Babylon, many Jews were allowed to return to Israel. They rebuilt Jerusalem’s walls and houses and built a new temple to worship God. God sent them messengers to motivate and encourage them for this work, but from 400 B.C. until 12 months before the birth of Jesus, there are no new prophets or recorded messages from God. 400 years of silence.

Imagine the effect of 400 years of silence. How can God’s people maintain a sense of anticipation in the face of such prolonged quiet?

Read the following passages and observe a variety of people who lived when Jesus was born. Some were ready for the Messiah at His birth and others were not. For each person or group, try to discern what made them ready or unprepared. Then, discuss the follow-up questions.

Luke 2:1-7, Luke 2:21-38, Matthew 2:1-16

Bethlehem and the innkeeper, Simeon, Anna, wise men, Herod,
Jewish religious leaders

Ready _____ Unprepared

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Discussion:

How is the preparation of the wise men ironic?

Why was Herod so threatened by Jesus’ birth?

Why wouldn’t the religious leaders go check out the baby the wise men announced?

What clue do we have that Simeon and Anna were not alone in their anticipation (Lk 2:38)?

If you had lived in Israel at this time, do you think you would have been watching for Jesus? Why or why not?

How can God’s people today maintain an attitude of anticipation so we notice and celebrate what God is doing?

Pray for each other’s hearts and focus in the midst of our busy lives.