



Seeing Christmas: Our Family & Friends | December 25, 2019

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

What is it about family that just makes the holidays? Even the difficult and the weird ones. There's just something about it. Read more about how faith goes with family below.

Key Verses

Isaiah 52:7 (NIV)

"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'"

Discussion

If you don't live near immediate family, figuring out how to be home for the holidays can be a big deal. The truth is, there is something about Christmas that causes us to jump through hoops and bend over backwards to do everything we can to be around family. We've all seen videos of families being reunited at the holidays, or military spouses coming home for Christmas. They are tear jerkers every time because they speak to some of our deepest emotions.

1. Describe a time you had to go "above and beyond" to be home for the holidays. Why did it mean so much to you?
2. Why do you think these videos make us so emotional? What about our human nature causes us to resonate with them?

The friends and family in our lives not only have the ability to shape us and grow us, but they are also the people who extend to us the most patience and grace. And in our current series, based on the book *Seeing Christmas* by Karen Stacy, we are trying to look a little differently at the things that are typically part of the Christmas season, family and friends included. Karen says that family is such an important part of Christmas. She also talks about the importance of the village, or the friends in our everyday lives that surround us and support us. She says that our family represents Jesus, because of the grace and patience we extend to one another. And that the village also represents Jesus, because of the lights inside, similar to the way Jesus abides in each of us.

3. What is one way you see Jesus in your family members?
4. Describe your "village." How might they represent Jesus in your life?

There are really two places in our lives that family and friends show up as representations of Jesus. The first is that we cannot do this life alone. God throughout all of history has used people to grow and shape us. And the second is, that because these people are kind of stuck with us, they choose to extend patience and grace to us, even when we don't always deserve it. In Isaiah 52:7, we read a beautiful, poetic prediction about the coming baby Jesus. It's really good news – he is here and reigns forever! The people in your life serve as representations of him, while encouraging you to "go out and proclaim the good news."

5. What is one way your family and friends have encouraged you to share the gospel?
6. How does your heart respond to the good news this Christmas season?

What's Next?

Think about a Christmas Eve candlelight service. All of the candles start unlit, until one gets lit and the flame is then passed around to the rest of the room. When watching the lights spread, you can almost feel the light and warmth. Everything that's going on outside of the church walls kinds of melts away. When Jesus showed up on this Earth, that's what people felt. Then people got excited and the good news started to spread.

This week, as you live out and engage your faith and Christmas, look around and see Jesus in your family and friends. Identify one new way you see Jesus, one way he's shown up in the past, and embrace how he could show up in the future. Think about how you might share the good news of Jesus' coming this week.