

CHRISTMAS A Time to be Still

The awe and wonder of it all

(From a blogpost written by Marja (<http://marjabergen.blogpost.com>) on December 4th, 2007):

Last year's Christmas was a stressful time for me. I truly suffered from all the negative aspects of the season: the huge number of fliers coming to the door irked me; the full parking lots at the mall overwhelmed me; the stores with the Christmas music and the pushing of goods bothered me. The materialism of it all - the having to live up to all the traditions, when I wasn't in the mood - the pressures of going to parties and having to entertain family at home were more than I could bear. I saw it as a chaotic time, one I wished I could escape.

But - blessing of all blessings - this year is different. I feel at peace. I don't feel pressured. I'm enjoying the season. And this started happening even as I was struggling with depression over the past few weeks. That's truly amazing! Thank God!

So I went to church this Sunday - the first Sunday of the Advent season - eager for Pastor Don's sermon. He didn't let me down. He talked about how Advent should be a time of quiet waiting - a time to look forward to Jesus' coming.

Unfortunately Christmas has become a time of chaos for many of us, when it should be a time of awe and wonder. Just think of it: the child Jesus who was born was God, come to earth to walk amongst us. He came to show us who God is and what he's like. He showed us God's great love and illustrated his amazing grace.

Christmas is very much a time of fantasy and nostalgia, a time when we try to recreate feelings we had in the past. But recreating those feelings can be difficult in the lives we're living today. We often end up with pain when we can't do it. But if we could remember to focus on Jesus, the whole reason we are celebrating, perhaps we could escape the pain and lighten the expectations we put on ourselves. Perhaps we could escape all the noisy stuff and the chaos.

The time leading up to Christmas should be a time for stillness, a time for peaceful reflection. Think about what a mystery God's coming into the world was! Think of the awe and wonder of it all!

Why make a big anxious fuss over Christmas, the season where we talk about peace and joy? Do what feels best for you in the mood you're dealing with at the time. Spend time with family and friends. But, most of all, spend time with God.

God says to you and me:

"Be still and know that I am God..." Psalm 46:10 (NIV)

"Step out of the traffic! Talk a long, loving look at me, your High God..." Ps. 46:10 (MSG)