



Light & Darkness

Gatherings

Spiritual & Simple

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Vibe: This framework provides encouragement for the most natural of gatherings in your everyday life.

Length: Limitless

Materials: Your eyes to see, your ears to remain open, your voice in humbleness and your genuine, soft heart - (plus a little bit of gumption).

Resources: You, time and the Holy Spirit.

Alright, so this “spiritual & simple” framework isn’t really for a specific gathering - rather it’s an encouragement for you to take on a lifestyle that engages your awareness for those around you. As you brush up against people in your days whether it’s at work, on the sidewalk, at the playground, on the subway - wherever it might be, consider an inclination to slow down and take time to connect with those around you. If you can start to see the opportunity that exists, in any conversation, or coffee date or meal at your table as a meaningful and spiritual encounter - you can perhaps start to wrap your head around the idea that our one great life is in fact one large “gathering”. A gathering that encompasses all of humanity, made up of endless, simple and spiritual interactions with the world around us.

If a larger gathering as outlined in the traditional and modern frameworks in this packet feels like too much to entertain this season - can I encourage you to invite people into your life in the most natural of ways? Perhaps invite neighbors or friends that you haven’t yet had sit at your table over for dinner or drinks? Or meet someone you haven’t hung out with for coffee? Or hang a little longer at “drop-off” or “pick-up” at your kid’s school? And in those spaces could I encourage you to be intentional about your conversation? Could you talk along these terms of light and darkness - and ask, what’s been tough, or troubling or painful for them this year? What are they hoping or longing for in their life? As you mutually share - listen to their words, hear them as prayers and ask God to act on their behalf as well.

This Christmas season, as you lean into the wonder of Jesus’ birth, may you approach Him with all of yourself. Try not to restrain your lament; your deep, searing pain and bewilderment, your anger and your grief. Try not to hold back from being brave and daring enough to hope. As you take both your light and darkness to Jesus - take a long, slow look at Him. Ask Him to act on behalf of your laments and hopes and make space to see His movement. His way, suggests often that we imagine, move, speak and act differently than we might be inclined and yet as we do, these pathways for connection with the people around us - whether in more structured, or casual or even in the most simplistic of manners will rise to our forefront.

May it be so.

Peace and goodwill to you this Christmas season.

Resources

Spiritual & Simple Gathering: Scripture

(For your personal meditation and reflection)

Isaiah 11:1 - 9 (NLT)

- 1 Out of the stump of David's family will grow a shoot—
yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root.
- 2 And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
- 3 He will delight in obeying the Lord.
He will not judge by appearance
nor make a decision based on hearsay.
- 4 He will give justice to the poor
and make fair decisions for the exploited.
The earth will shake at the force of his word,
and one breath from his mouth will destroy the wicked.
- 5 He will wear righteousness like a belt
and truth like an undergarment.
- 6 In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together;
the leopard will lie down with the baby goat.
The calf and the yearling will be safe with the lion,
and a little child will lead them all.
- 7 The cow will graze near the bear.
The cub and the calf will lie down together.
The lion will eat hay like a cow.
- 8 The baby will play safely near the hole of a cobra.
Yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly snakes without harm.
- 9 Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,
for as the waters fill the sea,
so the earth will be filled with people who know the Lord.

Psalms 146 (NLT)

- 1 Praise the Lord!
Let all that I am praise the Lord.

2 I will praise the Lord as long as I live.
I will sing praises to my God with my dying breath.

3 Don't put your confidence in powerful people;
there is no help for you there.

4 When they breathe their last, they return to the earth,
and all their plans die with them.

5 But joyful are those who have the God of Israel as their helper,
whose hope is in the Lord their God.

6 He made heaven and earth,
the sea, and everything in them.
He keeps every promise forever.

7 He gives justice to the oppressed
and food to the hungry.
The Lord frees the prisoners.

8 The Lord opens the eyes of the blind.
The Lord lifts up those who are weighed down.
The Lord loves the godly.

9 The Lord protects the foreigners among us.
He cares for the orphans and widows,
but he frustrates the plans of the wicked.

10 The Lord will reign forever.
He will be your God, O Jerusalem, throughout the generations.
Praise the Lord!

John 13:34-35 (NLT)

34 So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. **35** Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

Luke 10:27 (NLT)

27 The man answered, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ And, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Romans 12: 9-13

9 Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. **10** Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. **11** Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. **12** Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. **13** When God's people are in need, be ready to help them.