



**Let us rediscover the
true meaning of Christmas
and celebrate it with reverence**

***Towards a meaningful Christmas ...
A simple worship oriented Christmas***

Some suggestions and recommendations



As a first step towards celebrating Christmas meaningfully, let us re-examine some of the ways we celebrate Christmas and to re-capture the true meaning of this sacred event, where God took upon the human nature in Jesus Christ so that all may be saved, liberated from all forms of social evil and have life in it fulness and inherit the promise of life eternal.

Christmas, has in the recent times been commercialized to a very great extent undermining the true spirit. Therefore we place some practical suggestions (see enclosed) to enable us to re-discover the true joy and happiness of Christmas and to avoid the usual 'tamashas'.

While making these humble suggestions, we are also conscious about the expectations that have built among the children during Christmas. We do not intend to deprive their joy but enable them also to re-discover the true meaning of Christmas that would enable them to experience the true meaning of this great event, so that they have lasting happiness and peace.

- ▶ Some fundamental Biblical truths that need to be emphasized during this season:
 - ▷ Jesus came to save us from our sins and release from the bondage of all social evils.
 - ▷ Jesus was born in a stable. He had no room in the inn.
 - ▷ Jesus was God emptying Himself of all power and authority and taking on the form of a slave.
 - ▷ Jesus was a refugee child fleeing political manipulation.

Some key Biblical texts and themes we need to recapture at this time and the focus of our reflection can be summarized as follows:

Luke 1:46–55

He has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.... The mighty one has done great things and lifted up the lowly.

Matthew 2:21–23

He made his home in a town called Nazareth, in the District of Galilee

Luke 2:6–7

She wrapped him in cloths ad placed him in a manger

<i>Matthew 2:13–15</i>	<i>He took the Child and His mother by night and went to Egypt.</i>
<i>John 3:16</i>	<i>For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son.</i>
<i>Philippians 2:5–11</i>	<i>He emptied himself to the form of a slave</i>
<i>Revelation 22:13–17</i>	<i>The bright morning star – water of life as a gift</i>

Some practical suggestions that will enable to recapture the meaning of Christmas and make our celebrations appropriate are as follows:

A. For Congregations

- ▶ Have a day of Prayer in the month of November (preferably on the Poya day) to prayerfully enter into the season of Advent, not only reflecting on the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, but His coming again as well. Advent is a time when we not only celebrate the Christ who came but the final coming of Christ that we await in great anticipation as well.
- ▶ Have at least two sermons during the month of November, emphasizing simplicity, prayer and worship (the shepherds and the kings worshipped the Child) and the celebration of the Prince of Peace as essential elements of the Christmas event.
- ▶ Educate and encourage your members to avoid unnecessary tamashas, dinner and dances in luxurious hotels, fun fairs etc.
- ▶ Create awareness among your members to avoid liquor.
- ▶ Explain to the people that Christmas is not all about shopping.
- ▶ Plant at least 5 trees as a Church community, either in the Church compound or in public places and protect and nurture it throughout the coming year.
- ▶ Explore the possibility of integrating those who are involved in janitorial services or cleaning roads, removing garbage etc in your Christmas programme and share with them the joy and happiness of this season.

- ▶ Give sufficient attention to those who live with disabilities, to be integrated in your service etc at Christmas.
- ▶ Focus on the refugee child Jesus and extend your support and prayers towards those who are refugees, displaced etc.

B. For Families

- ▶ Have a family meal during the latter part of November or early December where the Head of the household will explain the true meaning of Christmas and Advent to all family members (following the tradition of the Passover meal).
- ▶ Make it a point to visit and invite the elderly to be with your family during this season.
- ▶ Say no to luxury parties, dinner dances in hotels and clubs etc.
- ▶ Re-think before you make your Christmas cake.
- ▶ Buy your children their new clothes and toys, but always explain to them the importance of simplicity and sharing.
- ▶ Encourage them to save at least Rs. 10/ – each day during the month of December in order to meet the need of a poor child in your neighbourhood.
- ▶ Pay extra attention to those who live with disabilities and integrate them well into your family life.
- ▶ Plant a tree in your compound or neighbourhood and nurture it.
- ▶ Do not forget to invite your grandparents, elders and other elderly friends to your home on Christmas Day to make it a memorable day for them.
- ▶ Say no to liquor in the name of Christmas.

C. Sunday Schools

- ▶ Do not immediately cut on their joys and expectations of children but have a special session for Sunday School children, explaining the true facts behind Santa Clause (it is actually St. Nicholas who helped the poor and needy without revealing his identity) and the emphasis on helping the needy and the poor.
- ▶ Make the Sunday School parties interactive and joyful but also of revealing the true meaning and include some children from the neighbourhood.
- ▶ Encourage them to help one of their less fortunate friends during Christmas.

D. Decorations at Christmas

- ▶ Avoid using polythene.
- ▶ Christmas tree is not essential. If you want to have one, decorate a live tree. Do not cut branches or use artificial trees.

E. Online Petition

- ▶ There will be an online petition to be signed by the faithful, requesting the State and Business Establishments to help in observing Christmas in simplicity and spiritually edifying ways to join this campaign.
- ▶ We do hope that you would extend your utmost cooperation in making Christmas a meaningful, joyful season when we truly experience the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.



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