

Advent

Isaiah 8:17

Week of December 3, 2023

BELONG

Ask this Ice Breaker Question: What is the best and worst line that you have waited in line during the Christmas season? To see Santa? For Black Friday deals? To check out at a store?

BELIEVE

Have someone in your group read aloud: Isaiah 8:17

Ask these questions to prompt group discussion:

- 1. New York pastor and author Rich Villodas notes that “The good news is not that we are faithful in our waiting, but that God is faithful in His coming.” When you think about waiting for the Lord, do you generally tend to focus more on the doldrum of waiting, or the anticipation of The Lord’s coming?**
- 2. Hiding His face seems to be part of God’s purpose in relating to us. Isaiah mentions that we wait while God hides His face. God also hides His face when He meets with Moses in Exodus 34. What do you think God is accomplishing in us when He hides His face?**

Leader Context:

- *God is being a gentleman here. In the same way a gentleman takes off his hat in front of a lady, so too God withdraws His face from us so as not to frighten us.*
- *We are human beings who want to live by sight, not by faith. Seeing God seems like it would bolster us, when evidence suggests it actually frightens us away.*
- *We always ask for a sign. But evidence suggests a sign would likely dissuade us.*

- 3. Isaiah ties hope to our waiting. How do you suppose that waiting helps reorient us to our hope?**

Leader Context:

- *Hope is a person, not a feeling.*
- *The pain of things being removed requires us to get down to the basics.*

- *Either we will follow Jesus or we will not. Either we believe in Jesus or we don't.*
- *Waiting gives us time to gather ourselves and make sure we are settled on truth.*
- *In a healthy debate, opponents will grant time to wait on one another so that they may gather their thoughts and allow the most fruitful arguments to make their entry. Likewise, in worship, God gives us time to wait to make sure our words are true.*

BECOME:

4. Groups Challenge: Continue discussion about the ways that your group can use their gifts to serve our church body during the Christmas Season.

- a. The Christmas Festival: December 16-17
- b. Men's Ministry Fire Night: December 10
- c. Serving on Christmas Eve