

Making Room in Advent Week Four Discussion Questions

- 1) In this week's message, Pastor Aaron talks about how the Wisemen in The Christmas Story shows how God makes room for everyone even though we might question whether we belong. Do you struggle to feel like you belong in God's family? 1 John 4:15 says, "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God." If you struggle to feel like you belong, talk with God in prayer. Share with God how you believe in Jesus and ask God to help you see how He abides in you. Ask God to help you feel like you belong to Him and your church family.
- 2) On page 57 of the Making Room in Advent devotional, the author writes, "Jesus creates a world in which every person of every ethnicity, tribe, and gender are welcome to his table that is overflowing with his resources, love, and belonging. All have an equal inheritance in his kingdom family." Pastor Aaron said in his message, "We all belong to God. We all belong to each other." Read 1 John 4:7-21. What is God speaking to you through these verses?
- 3) Pastor Aaron shares how the Wisemen would have been the antithesis of Jesus during this time in history. Pastor Aaron says this shows something important about who God is by who God invited to the manger. The church is not meant to be a country club or a fraternity where we have specific standards of belief to belong. On page 78 of the Making Room in Advent devotional, the author writes, "Is there a posture of pride, greed, or self-righteousness that needs to be humbled? How are biases like racism, sexism, and classism creating blockades to his work? We must allow God to expose the barriers in our hearts and organizations that bar God's kingdom from coming to all people." What barriers in your heart or organizations you belong to are stopping God's kingdom from coming to all people?
- 4) Everyone is invited to follow Jesus, but like the Wisemen, people must journey toward Jesus. Pastor Aaron said, "The group of Magi notice a star shining brightly in the sky, and then they go and do something about it." We do not earn our way to heaven, so please do not misunderstand. Ponder on the words of Dallas Willard, "Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning. Earning is an attitude. Effort is an action." What is the difference between earning and effort?
- 5) Sometimes, we don't feel like we belong because we await an invitation. In Jesus, we have the invitation to join Him in His work in the world. Have you asked God how He wants to work through you? Pastor Aaron says, "When we realize we are worth Jesus to God, we become the inviter. Instead of waiting to be invited, we welcome the outsider. We open our circles to include more and more people around the table. Who is God calling you to invite to your home, with you to church, or your small group?
- 6) Ponder on Day Twenty-Five of the Making Room in Advent devotional. How might God's call on your life conflict with the expectations of family and friends? How is this difficult for you?

7) As you reach the end of the Advent devotional, what stands out most in your relationship with God? What is God teaching you? What has He shown you through the study?