



There are many words we associate with the Christmas season: Joy, Faith, Hope, Love. But the word “Fear” isn’t usually one of them. Nevertheless, as we read the accounts of Christ’s birth in the Bible, the phrase “Do not be afraid” appears frequently. Maybe we have become too familiar with the story to recognize the key characters as human, with circumstances and emotions we can relate to. Fear is so much a part of our human experience that it should come as no surprise that even at Christmas (maybe especially at Christmas) fear is with us. This Advent Season, as we contemplate the miracle of “God With Us” may we hear Him when He says, “Fear not.”

### Week Three: Hopes and Fears (*Matthew 2:1-23*)

#### Discussion Questions:

The following are based on the “My Application” Questions found in the bulletin this week. (Leader, urge your group members to attend worship—or watch the sermon online—and to spend time considering and answering those questions before coming to the group. This will produce a richer discussion time.)

- 1) Make a list of all the hopes and emotions associated with Christmas for you. Now read Matthew 2:12. Compare your list with the experience of Mary and Joseph.
- 2) What was the most fearful thing you faced in the last five years? Did you feel surprised by it?
- 3) How do you reconcile God’s love with your experience? (see John 16:33, Romans 8:28-39)
- 4) God provided specific guidance for Joseph, but he was required to obey. What are some areas God is leading you to obey him in?
- 5) What conversation do you need to have with God this Christmas?

### Application:

On Christmas Eve each year, thousands of people come to Hill Country to celebrate. Many are visitors, unfamiliar with our campus. Often they are open to hearing the message of God's love as they are at no other time. It is **our mission** to make them feel welcome and comfortable, like honored guests in our home (not stressed and confused, like outsiders). Accomplishing that mission will require MANY volunteer hosts/hostesses.

Can you give an hour or two this Christmas Eve to help us extend the love of Jesus to these honored guests? We need ushers, greeters, coffee and cookie servers. If you would like to volunteer, you can sign up at

Lakeline: <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/wrrqs>

Brushy Creek: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0a4bafa92aa1fe3-christmas>

Crystal Falls: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c48a9ad2ca6ff2-crystal>

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### Group Prayer:

Pair up with a friend—men with men, women with women. Share with one another what you find making you fearful or anxious the Christmas, or an area you feel God asks for your obedience. Pray for each other. Then thank Him together for the hope He has given you.

### Scripture Memory:

*When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.  
On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary,  
and they bowed down and worshiped him.  
Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.*

*Matthew 2:10-11*