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Advent: Lessons in Waiting

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Advent: Lessons in Waiting

Abstract

"Waiting is open-ended, filled with hope for what God desires to bring us beyond our imagination."

Posting about the benefits of learning to wait from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/advent-lessons-in-waiting/>

Keywords

In All Things, Advent, waiting, expectation, patience

Disciplines

Christianity

Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

Advent: Lessons in Waiting

 inallthings.org/advent-lessons-in-waiting/

Barb Hoekstra

This is post 8 of 8 in the series *“Advent Devotions”*

1. [Advent: The Messy Preparation](#)
2. [Preparing, Advent and Psalm 51](#)
3. [Advent: Clearing a Path for Christmas](#)
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8. Advent: Lessons in Waiting

In the case of waiting, experience does not generate expertise. We all have experience waiting. We endure short-term waiting in lines, at stoplights, or for commercials to be over. We endure long-term waiting for decisions to be made, diagnoses to be given, and events to occur. With all this experience, we think we should be good at it.

Unfortunately, we aren't usually very good at waiting. We wait in a variety of unhealthy ways: passively, helplessly, anxiously, and angrily. Waiting is so pervasive and encompassing it moves beyond being a mental act, causing bodily responses such as thumb twiddling, hand wringing, nail biting, and fist pounding. I can remember feeling physically sick as my husband and I waited for our son, Max, to come to our family from an orphanage in China. Thirteen months felt like an awful endlessness.

During this very uncomfortable wait for Max, I was driven to consider waiting in better ways. I was led to two Advent readings, one by Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt, titled *Action in Waiting* (1998) and another by Henri Nouwen, titled *Waiting for God* (1993). Blumhardt, introduced me to the significant and rudimentary idea that daily waiting, like the types mentioned above, is meant to remind us of our ultimate wait for the Lord's return. Waiting can be seen as a blessing rather than a curse because it prompts us to look for Christ at work on earth and Christ coming to earth. Nouwen showed me that the Bible is full of “waiters”—Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon and Anna—and these people are representative of the remnant of Israel. Nouwen asks and answers the question, “How are they [people of the Bible] waiting, and how are we called to wait with them?” Nouwen's conclusions are insightful and practical:

- People who wait have received a promise that allows them to wait.
- While waiting, we are to be fully present in the moment, believing that this moment is the moment.
- A waiting person is a patient person who believes something hidden will be evident to us.
- Waiting is open-ended, filled with hope for what God desires to bring us beyond our imagination.
- We wait together.
- We wait patiently in expectation.

While we wait for the mundane or the Magnificent, let us wait like Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary, and Simeon and Anna: attentively and expectantly.