



WEEK 1 DEVOTIONAL

HOME ALONE | The Gift of Love

RECEIVE

Take a few moments to read **Genesis 2:18** and **Luke 2:8-18**. Read these passages slowly, thoughtfully, prayerfully open to the Spirit's promptings. As you read, journal words or phrases that stand out to you. Then go back and consider why those words and phrases caught your attention. Finally, read and consider where the Holy Spirit is helping you to live out these verses in your relationships and community this Advent season.

REFLECT

1. What is the full meaning of the word "alone" in the context of Genesis? Knowing that Adam has God "all to himself" what thoughts, questions or feelings stir in you when you hear God say, *"it's not good for the man to be alone."*
2. How does this strengthen your view of community?
3. When do you feel most alone? Journal about a time you have felt alone in a crowd. Why do you believe that was?
4. Then we have a different sense of "alone" in the shepherds. We have an alone that was caused by the larger community neglecting and treating them unjustly.

5. When the shepherds heard the angels announcement, what do you think was going through their hearts and minds? Place yourself in their sandals that extraordinary evening, imagine the angelic event what are you feeling, seeing? How does this effect the next days, months, years of your life? Journal through some thoughts and feelings "from the scene."
6. "...good news of great joy that will be for all people..." What does that mean for you? A theme word for Dan's message is "alone". We have Genesis "alone" and we have the Shepherd's "alone" – what is your alone? Why is that important to you? Why is that important for your community, church, neighborhood, work, family?

RESPOND

7. What is the antidote to feeling alone? Can you find one place you can initiate a contact with another person? Someone next to you at church that you don't know; a neighbor whom you haven't befriended; someone in your family that you need to call; who is God prompting you to reach out to and connect with – perhaps as an answer to their loneliness. Maybe invite them to watch *Home Alone*.
8. A more challenging suggestion was initiating reconciliation with someone. When you heard this did God bring someone to mind? Will you pray and honestly question God what is being asked of you?
9. We often live within barriers we don't realize we have constructed. Our relentless "don't get behind, get it done" leaves us half paying attention to the conversations we do have, while we "multi-task" away our chance to not be alone. Would you put the screen down and be present this week? Try this practice to be fully present by initiating a screen-free time of conversation. See what happens!
10. The ultimate answer to our aloneness is the, "good news of great joy that will be for all people." That is the presence and promise of Jesus. If you do not have that good news, that great joy, we pray you would initiate that conversation this week—right now. Let God enter into your loneliness and fill it with His Love and Grace. If you have questions about this or would like to talk through it please contact Pastor Eric Haskins: ehaskins@ChristChurch.us.

11. With these new-found insights, gather your favorite people, make some popcorn and hot chocolate and watch the movie *Home Alone*.

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 2:18 | New International Version

¹⁸ The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Luke 2:8–18 | New International Version

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.