



Welcome to Table Liturgy. A table is an open invitation into the presence and hospitality of a loving God. This is a resource designed to extend our corporate worship when we gather as Missional Communities, in our homes and around our tables.

How to use Table Liturgy:

Table Liturgy is designed to take place around a meal, with a short section before the food and the rest afterwards, framing our meal-time as an act of worship.

Your community might want to have bread and wine or a candle symbolically in the middle to remind you of Christ's presence.

You may also want to encourage people to feast and celebrate by bringing their favourite wine or something that makes the meal feel special. Alternatively, you may want to make a very simple offer of hospitality which captures the accessibility of the Kingdom.

One person in the group should assume the role of the Leader to facilitate the liturgy and the times of sharing. Another person can say the reading. Words written in **bold** are to be recited by all.

A digital copy of this resource is available at:  
[apbc.net/tableliturgy](http://apbc.net/tableliturgy)

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# TABLE LITURGY | advent 22

## waiting through the dark night

### welcome *before food*

Leader: Let's remember that Advent is a season of waiting and longing. It begins in darkness and so this liturgy encourages us to offer prayers in the night. We light a candle to remind us of Christ's presence with us.

*Leader lights a candle*

### reading: james 5: 7-10

Reader: Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.

You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors!

As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Leader: The Scriptures say "draw near to God and he will draw near to you".

**All: With thankfulness and humility we draw near.**

### food

### reading: isaiah 35: 1 - 6

Reader: The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."

(*cont.*) Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;

Leader: O Lord, arise, arise,  
O Lord, help us;  
Deliver us, O Lord,  
For your Name's sake

**All: Glory to the Holy and undivided Trinity,  
One God: as it was in the beginning, is now,  
And will be forever. Amen.**

Leader: O Christ, Son of the living God,  
Help us when we are too downcast to pray,  
And grant that we may trust you all our days,  
For you are with us in all seasons of our lives,  
Jesus, Lord and God

**All: Amen.**

Leader: In the darkness of unknowing,  
When your love seems absent,  
Draw near to us, O God.  
In Christ forsaken  
In Christ risen  
Our Redeemer and our Lord

**All: Amen.**

Leader: I wait for the Lord, my soul waits and in God's word I hope;

**All: My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch  
for morning, more than those who watch for morning.**

### share

*Name some of the areas of darkness that you are aware of in your own situation, or globally.*

Leader: O Lord, arise, arise,  
O Lord, help us;  
**All: Deliver us, O Lord,  
For your Name's sake**

### reading: romans 13: 12

Reader: The night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light;

Leader: "Advent begins in the dark and moves toward the light—but the season should not move too quickly or too glibly, lest we fail to acknowledge the depth of the darkness. As our Lord Jesus tells us, unless we see the light of God clearly, what we call light is actually darkness: "how great is that darkness!" (Matt. 6:23). Advent bids us take a fearless inventory of the darkness: the darkness without and the darkness within." (Fleming Rutledge, *Advent: The Once and Future Coming of Jesus Christ*)

### collect

1. Spend a few moments in prayer together for situations, particularly those that feel most hopeless, in our world and in your own lives.
2. If there is time, share a short devotion, from the Scriptures, about waiting in hope, e.g. Simeon and Anna's story from Luke 2:22-40, Hannah's story from 1 Samuel 1 or the beggar's story from Acts 3:1-10'

Leader: God is our stronghold,  
God will help at the break of day

**All: God will help at the break of day**

Leader: God is our refuge and strength  
Ready to help whenever we are in trouble

**All: God will help at the break of day**

Leader: We will not fear, even if the earth shakes,  
And the mountains topple into the sea

**All: God will help at the break of day.**

Leader: Come now and look at the works of the Lord  
The awesome things he has done on earth

**All: God will help at the break of day**

Leader: Be still and know that I am God  
I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth

**All: God will help at the break of day**

Leader: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit  
The Lord is with us, God is our stronghold

**All: God will help at the break of day  
Amen.**

**All: "Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you." (Deuteronomy: 31:6)**