

## How Do We Prepare for Christmas?

Christmas requires more preparation than any other holiday. On one level, Christmas is a historical observance. Columbus Day recalls the arrival of Europeans on American shores. Patriot Day and Pearl Harbor Day commemorate attacks on our country. Thanksgiving Day got started as a day of sharing food and peace among Pilgrims and Native Americans. All those days teach a lesson in history. So does Christmas. It celebrates the birthday of a child in Bethlehem. But no holiday requires as much preparation as this one.

We give a lot of ourselves to Christmas. We buy gifts for others. We contribute to charities. We send cards. We decorate our homes. We wear seasonal clothing. We make special food. We go to parties. We watch parades. We invest a lot of time and talent into this season.

Even for non-believers, Christmas is about community. It's about reconnecting with the people who mean the most to us. Coming at the end of the year, it offers a natural time for introspection. Who are the significant people in my life? Why do I treasure them? How do I treasure them?

If possible, we spend time with them. We eat together, play together, and sing together. If that's not possible, we contact them by phone or mail, landline or electronic. We prepare for Christmas by making time for people.

For believers, though, Christmas operates on another level. It is not just the historical observance of the birth of a child in Bethlehem. It is the belief that God became human. It is the wonder that the world around us is not all there is – that the One who caused this world into being took time to be with us in a special way.

Christmas is all about community, but for Christians it is also about our Christ. We take time to foster the friendships that mean the most to us, and we include Jesus in the list.

As you prepare for this holiday, think about the kind of Christmas you'd like to have. If you are including friends in Christmas this year, how will you do it? If you are including God in Christmas, how will you do that? What kind of card will you send out? Which stamp will you put on the envelope? What kind of presents will you buy for other people? Will you include charities and churches on your gift list? What words will you say when you greet people on the phone or in person?

The churches in Cameron all welcome you to include us in your celebration of Christmas. We also welcome you to include us in your preparation for Christmas. We're here not just for Christmas services, but on the weeks leading up to them. Your most meaningful friendships are the ones you spend the most time on. If you want not just a merry Christmas, but a holy one this year, prepare for it by spending time on the most meaningful relationship of all: your friendship with God.