

NFAMLP December 2025 Newsletter Article

Advent is a season of waiting and preparation, a time when the Church holds its breath for the coming of its Savior. This period of anticipation can often feel long, especially when we look at the world around us and long for the fulfillment of God's promises.

For the local church pastor there is an unofficial period of preparation that comes prior to every season of the church calendar. In the case of Advent, we prepare for the season of preparation. Our planning and anticipation never stops, only readjust. Patience in the midst of such intentional work is a fruit of the Spirit that the pastor deeply relies upon.

The apostle James speaks directly to this experience in James 5:7-10, urging believers to practice patient endurance. He tells us, "Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord," setting a tone that is both hopeful and realistic about the challenges of waiting. Just as a farmer must wait patiently for the precious harvest, enduring all the seasons and the elements, so too must we wait for the Lord's return. The farmer does not try to rush the sun or force the rain; he simply prepares the soil and waits with certainty for what is sure to come. This Advent, we are called to embody that same patient spirit, anchoring our hearts not in the immediate satisfaction of our desires, but in the certain hope of Christ's arrival.

James continues this theme by encouraging us to strengthen our hearts, assuring us that "the coming of the Lord is near." This call to fortitude reminds us that waiting in faith is not a passive activity but an active one. It is a spiritual discipline that refines our character and deepens our reliance on God. To illustrate this patient suffering, James points to the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. These were individuals who faced immense persecution and hardship, yet they remained steadfast in their proclamation of truth, even when the fulfillment of their prophecies seemed distant. They are presented as an "example of suffering and patience." Their lives serve as a testament that our current struggles and the long wait for justice are not meaningless. As we light the candles of the Advent wreath and sing songs of hope, we join a chorus of faithful witnesses who waited before us and found strength in the Lord's promised deliverance.

Ultimately, this passage from James is a powerful reminder that our hope is not in vain. The Lord is described as "compassionate and merciful," qualities that assure us He sees our struggles and hears our prayers even as we wait. We are not waiting for an indifferent judge, but for a loving Savior who is intimately acquainted with our sorrows. Our call this Advent is to "stand firm" in this assurance. In a world that often prizes immediate results and quick fixes, the biblical call to patiently wait for the Lord's coming challenges us to reorient our perspective. It invites us to cultivate a heart that is ready and watchful, full of enduring hope and steadfast faith, certain that the Lord's timing is perfect and His promised arrival is near.

Praise be to God!

