

Celebrating Easter Morning as a Family

*"Why do you look for the living among the dead?
[Jesus] is not here, but has risen."
Luke 24:5b*

Even if the sun is shining, Good Friday always seems a sombre day to me. It may be called "Good," which is actually derived from "God's" Friday, but God's Friday always feels just like that—a day that I need to give to God, in worship, in prayer, in waiting. But then comes Easter morning, and, even if it is raining, I feel the joy, the hope, the possibility. I can't wait to see everyone in church that morning. The love is tangible as we gather—God's love for us and our love for each other. We are there to care for one another, to support one another, and to celebrate together the news I get to shout out: "Christ is risen; he is risen indeed. Hallelujah!"

Now there are some who have come on Easter Sunday who are grieving, some who are stressed about life, finances, or illness, some who are in pain, some who are waiting to hear news that they aren't sure will be good, some who are out of work, and some dealing with depression. Some who gather on Easter may not feel the joy in the air or the tangible love as we gather. My prayer is that as we gather, a moment of joy will enter hurting hearts reminding them that they are not alone. With Easter, God played a joke on death, announcing that death would not have the final word. In the face of death and tragedy, God proclaims life and hope. Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed!

So, having waited, watched, and prayed through the sombre days of Holy Week, Easter morning is celebration time. Here are some ideas to make it a special morning:

1. **Set the table the night before** with a gold or multi-coloured tablecloth, good dishes, flowers, brightly coloured napkins, an Easter basket, and a candle to light. Make it something wonderful to see first thing in the

morning. Also, have your morning food prepared the night before, if possible.

2. **Get up just before sunrise** and watch the sunrise together. Cuddle together and watch the brightening sky out of the window, or outside in lawn chairs.

3. **Read together the Easter story** from Luke 24:1-12 and **Wonder** together:

- What part of this story do you like the best?
- What would it have been like to be there and find the empty tomb?
- How do you think the women felt when no one would believe them?
- What do you think Peter did after he walked away feeling puzzled?
- What would you would have done if you had been there that morning?

4. When the sun has risen and the sky is bright, **greet each other with the Easter greeting:**

You say: **Christ is risen!**
The other person responds: **Christ is risen indeed.**

Then you both say: **Hallelujah!**
(which means "Praise God!")

5. **Say a prayer of thanks together.** You might each name something for which you are thankful this morning. Remember to thank God for Jesus and for resurrection.

6. **Share a breakfast feast.** Hunt for Easter eggs! Celebrate! Easter is a whole season, not just one day, lasting for 50 days and ending at Pentecost. So how might you make this a whole season of celebrating the wonder of resurrection and new life? (It helps in the northern hemisphere that Easter comes in the season of spring which creates all sorts of ideas and possibilities for celebrating new life. In the southern hemisphere, Holy Week and Easter happen during the coming of autumn, and often Good Friday has greater emphasis than Easter Sunday.)