

TAKE away →

How has “family” been helpful to you on your journey?

If you were to idealize the “perfect” family what would be the primary ingredient that made it “perfect”?

How do you think families might get along if they each sought to understand before they seek to be understood?

Share a story when Thanksgiving or Christmas was made more challenging by some family member!

If you are without family or far from family how can you create a family this Christmas season?

If you are all wrapped up in your family how might you open it up to let some new members into it? 1 John 4:7-11

Sermon notes are available at www.hospitalchurch.org

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Surviving Christmas - 5 Ways to Cope

Christmas depression hits millions of people every year. Here are five ways to cope with the holiday blues, and make Christmas meaningful.

Don't Swallow the Commercial or Hollywood Hype—Christmas isn't about gorgeous decorations, unbelievably happy families, and expensive gifts. Don't fall into the trap of trying to be perfect or feel ecstatically happy. The market place turns Christmas into a merchandising cash cow – they also make Christmas about being flawless and full of glitter. Don't fall into that pit of despair.

Stay Active Over the Holiday Season—Getting enough exercise, oxygen, and fresh air may help lift the holiday blues. Simply go for a walk or take your kids, nieces, or nephews to the park.

Start New Christmas Traditions—If you've lost someone you love and this is the first Christmas without them, let yourself grieve naturally. Christmas depression is a normal way to feel – as long as it doesn't last for months afterward. Starting new traditions is a good way to lift your spirits and focus your energy outside yourself.

Be Aware of Your Family's Dynamics—Your family and friends may contribute to your holiday blues (though according to movies and television, they should really be helping you make Christmas meaningful.) You may not be able to change your family's dynamics, but at least be aware of how your family and friends affect you. To survive Christmas depression, find ways to shorten or eliminate the experiences that make you feel bad.

Get Professional Help With Severe Christmas Depression—If you're really struggling, and you know it's more than a mild case of the holiday blues, get help. If a family member or friend seems to be struggling with a serious case of Christmas depression, to reach out to them. Consider calling for outside help. Many volunteers work over Christmas at hotlines or help centers -- don't wait until it's too late!

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