love
love

‘For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.’

— Deuteronomy 10:17-19 NRSV

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.’ — John 13:34-35 NRSV

Christmas is the season of love. It is a time when we give and receive love in an extra-special way. We treat ourselves with new clothes and expensive gifts. We treat our family with a vacation, gifts and parties. We extend our love to our relatives, neighbours and friends with fancy meals. We go to church and participate in all the Christmas events. Seeing baby Jesus in a manger fills our hearts with love for the infant who has changed our lives for ever.

Christmas time always seems to be filled with joy and love. Our eyes catch the brightness and shimmering lights of the season. Our ears fill with carols and jingles. But sometimes, amidst the shiny decorations, we may not see the tears of a stranger. Or the sorrow of a young child. The cries of the hungry or the teenager running away from abuse. We may not hear the scream of a person being beaten. We may fail to see the elderly person shiver, looking pale.

We may not see, we may not hear, we may not notice. All because the glamour of Christmas – as the world celebrates it – can block it all out.

Deuteronomy 10:17-19 reminds us that no one goes unnoticed by God. His love extends to all. What he is asking of us is that we extend our circle and make it wider, and that we reach out to others. He wants us to share our love beyond ourselves, our family and our friends.

Let’s be reminded during this season that God wants us to demonstrate love by being the voice of the weak and to stand for justice. He wants us to share basic material possessions with those who are without.

Love for others is not a request and it is not a suggestion, but it is a command as given to us in John 13:34-35. Let’s show that love with all those whom God brings our way this Christmas.

Lieut-Colonel Nilanthi Philip
Secretary for Spiritual Life Development
Sri Lanka Territory
How can I express love and generosity this Advent, not only in the giving of gifts but also in my interactions with family, friends and strangers during this special season?

A Prayer for Love

Dear Lord Jesus,

Thank you for your unconditional love.

Help us to share the same Christ-like love with everyone this Christmas and every day.

AMEN