

## Small Grp Questions - Read Isaiah 9:1-7

1. What are Torontonians looking forward to these days? What presently gives our city hope, if at all? What are you looking forward to these days?
2. Isaiah described hope as imminent, as though it was already happening. Hope finally manifested in the Person of Jesus. Now, our future hope is in Jesus' second coming. How does the imminence of Jesus' return impact the way we live out our Christian lives here?

*We are prepared, watchful, and ready. The sense of urgency for Jesus' return should inform our every decision, action, word, thought, and emotion. We do not know exactly when Jesus will return. We also do not know how long we have in this life. Thus, we must treat every moment in life with utmost care, sacrifice, faith, and thanksgiving.*

3. Isaiah described hope as universal, being for all people. Despite our cosmopolitan demographic, Torontonians can be partisan, polarising, and at worst, ideological. How do we as Christians embody and foster the offer and universality of hope for all people?

*We must extend grace and Jesus-oriented optimism in our online and offline interactions. We resist the temptation to make cynical and snarky comments about all that is wrong in our world. Yes, we acknowledge that things are falling apart, but we must resist insisting that despair, destruction, and doom are the end of the story. We must speak in sober tones but also in hopeful tones.*

4. Isaiah described hope as humble. What are some simple and small ways we can embody and extend hope in our city?

*To start, reach out to people you have not been in touch with and ask how they are doing. Offer to meet. Extend fellowship. Share life. Surprise yourself with "random" acts of generosity. It does not have to be extravagant. Make someone smile genuinely. Be liberal to compliment and encourage others. We should be faithful and generous in the little that we have in this life because there will be much more that will be entrusted to us in the afterlife. This means every small and simple thing we do are significant. Mortal words and deeds have immortal significance.*

5. Isaiah described hope as eternal. How does God's promise of new creation, of new government, of new order, lasting forever, impact your way of life in Toronto?

*We work alongside with God to bring His kingdom to bear into this world. We do not wait passively for God to show up and just do nothing. We clear the tarmac for landing. We prepare the fields for rain. We ready the nursery room for the mother and child returning home from the hospital. We make ready this world for the return of Jesus Christ.*