

# Get Involved: Pray

---



## EMBRACE Prayer Group December 2011

Exile.

A cold word.

It even sounds like a regretful sigh.

Exile.

A form of isolation, appropriate for the winter season when the ground is frozen and the days shorten in blackness. But there is always the thaw, there is always the light and there is always hope.

There are two forms of exile, those who have it thrust upon them with no choice, for reasons of faith, political freedom, and economic need or for simply having the wrong skin colour. There are those for whom exile is simply self-imposed, such as the deposed dictator or the tax evader. And yet for most of us these seem far removed from our own personal situations.

Yet, in the end, the truth is that we are all exiles.

We were in the Garden of Eden.

We had all we could need. Everything was perfect and we belonged.

Yet we chose to walk our own path, to step away from God's loving advice, and to make our own world, in our own flawed image.

We are Exiles from Eden. We chose to leave.

And we have struggled to find a way back ever since.

The Jews sang of being exiles in ancient times, waiting for the arrival of the Messiah.

God sent us Christ as a guide and it is through Advent that we prepare for that coming.

We are all exiles here with our own selfishness, our own inability to admit our weakness, our brokenness, yet...

We are an Advent people and our God loves us all.

And we will, with God's Grace, leave our long exile and find our way Home.

*- An Advent reflection read by committee member Paddy Donnelly at a recently EMBRACE event.*

---

### During this season...

We give thanks for the coming of Jesus, who knew what it was like to be in exile as he fled to Egypt with Mary and Joseph.

We pray for all who find themselves in exile because of political, religious, or economic reasons.

May we all find ways of being bearers of hope for those who are isolated and alone.

#### EMBRACE

*Building a Welcoming Community*

48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6AZ

Tel: 0796 9921 328 E: [info@embraceni.org](mailto:info@embraceni.org)