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RCCG Open Heavens Christian Centre, Dundee

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Merry Christmas
from the Daughters of Zion

For unto you is born this day—
in the city of David a Savior,
which is Christ the Lord.

'Tis the Season to Spread Love: Understanding the True Meaning of Love
- Dr. Ivie Ehanmo

Every year, Christmas calls us into a season of joy, generosity, and celebration. Homes are decorated, streets are lit, gifts are exchanged, and families gather. Yet beneath the beauty and bustle lies the heartbeat of this season — **LOVE**.

Not the sentimental or commercial kind, but the divine love that descended from heaven and entered a broken world in form of a Child.

Scripture reminds us that God Himself is love (1 John 4:8). Christmas is therefore not merely a holiday; it is a revelation; a reminder that love is not a feeling, a gift under a tree, or a holiday tradition. Love is a Person. Love is Jesus.

1. The Birth of Christ: God's Love in Human Form

The true meaning of love is first and fully revealed in the Christmas story.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son..." — John 3:16

LOVE LETTER



You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

— 2 CORINTHIANS 3:3 NIV

Christmas is God's declaration that love gives. God did not send an angel, a prophet, or a message, He sent Himself. Love took on flesh, lived among us (John 1:14), and stepped into our darkness so that we might live in His light.

2. Love Is the Foundation of the Christian Life

In a world where love is often defined by convenience or emotion, Scripture brings clarity:

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." — 1 John 4:10

Love begins with God; not with us. We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Christmas teaches us that love is a commitment, a choice, and an action.

3. Christmas Challenges Us to Love Others Deeply

The coming of Christ is both a gift and a call. *"Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."* — 1 John 4:11

Love is shown not only in grand gestures but in everyday kindness, forgiveness, and care.

4. Love as Light in a Dark World

Christmas lights remind us of the Light of the World (John 8:12). A simple act of love can lift hearts and point others to Christ.

'Tis the Season and the Calling to Spread Love

This Christmas, may we not only celebrate the love God has shown us, but become vessels of that love. When we spread love, we spread Christ; and that is the true meaning of Christmas.

LOVE is the first fruit of the spirit and that's no surprise!

- by Lolade Olatunji

From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture is held together by one theme: **LOVE**.

In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul reminds us that love is not just something we feel – it is something we do. It shows up in our choices, in our patience, and sometimes, in our ability to bite our tongue.

Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year not only because we celebrate the birth of Christ, but because love entered the world, wrapped in swaddling clothes. It is like everybody's birthday at once, especially for those of us who believe Jesus Christ is Lord.

Love is patient: We see it in Abraham waiting years for Isaac, or George Muller the German-born evangelist who patiently prayed for provision and trusted God without fear. Love waits without sulking.

Love is kind: Ruth chose loyalty over comfort just as Mother Teresa chose service over applause. Love notices needs and quietly meets them. Ruth showed kindness by staying with Naomi even when it meant hardship and uncertainty. Love puts others first.

Love does not envy: Jonathan supported David even when it cost him his future. Billy Graham walked in humility,

never chasing glory. Love claps for others without checking the scoreboard. Jonathan's love was secure, selfless and free of jealousy.

Love is not proud: John the Baptist stepped aside so Christ could shine. True love points others to God, it does not seek attention. John the Baptist showed humility when he said of Jesus: He must increase, but I must decrease. Corrie ten Boom gave God the credit even after surviving great suffering. Love stays grounded.

Love is not self-seeking: Queen Esther risked her life for her people. Esther could have remained silent and safe, but love compelled her to act. Love requires courage and personal sacrifice. Dietrich Bonhoeffer stood for the truth at great cost. Love puts others first even when it's inconvenient.

Love is slow to anger: Desmond Tutu showed the world how forgiveness can be louder than revenge. Moses

learned this the hard way, but he was not always like this. In time, his leadership came to reflect a deep love for God's people, even to the point of interceding for them. Love chooses grace.

Love keeps no record of wrongdoing:

Nelson Mandela chose reconciliation over bitterness. Joseph forgave his brother who had betrayed him and instead of vengeance, he chose reconciliation and showed us that love releases resentment. Love does not keep receipts.

Love rejoices in truth: this was perfectly shown in our saviour Jesus who spoke truth with mercy, all the way to the cross. JESUS embodied perfect love. From his birth to his death, his loving presence healed, restored and ultimately sacrificed everything for us on the cross.

When love leads, God's Spirit is at work, just as it was long ago and still is today.

FAITH, HOPE, & LOVE

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



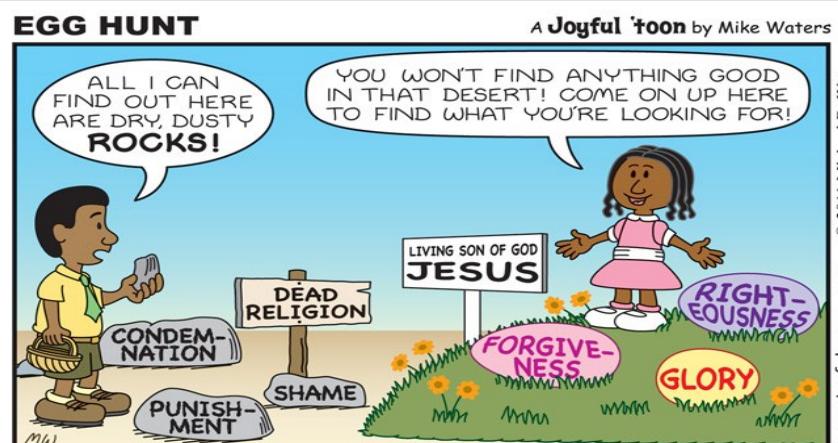
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And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

- 1 CORINTHIANS 13:13 NIV





And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?
— LUKE 24:5 KJV

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STUCK IN A ROLE AND READY TO PIVOT? HERE'S A GAME PLAN

If you're considering your next move, take heart—you're already starting from a position of strength because you are employed. That's valuable leverage; use it wisely.

Know your WHY! Be clear about what's motivating your change—whether it's better work-life balance, remote flexibility, personal growth, or a sense of purpose.

Define your destination: Clarify your target role or ideal organisations to give your job search a clear direction.

Study the market: Examine job adverts for your ideal roles and take note of the keywords, skills, and competencies that employers consistently seek.

Map your strengths: Match your experience to the role's requirements and evaluate how much of the position you are already equipped to handle.

Set smart alerts: Use job boards and targeted company websites to receive relevant opportunities, and apply early with customised, tailored applications.

Apply with intention: Prioritise quality over quantity. Time is valuable—use it wisely.

Track your progress: Maintain a simple job tracker to stay organised, focused, and motivated

Prepare to shine: Rehearse your interview answers until they come across naturally and confidently.

Network Purposefully: Connect with people already doing what you aspire to do.

Pray! Pray!! Pray!!

PRAYER MEETS THERAPY: SEEKING HELP IS NOT

LACK OF FAITH

- by Bolarin Claire

Many women in the church look strong and joyful on the outside, yet quietly battle stress, anxiety, or depression behind the scenes. Most of them hesitate to obtain professional support, held back by discomfort and a perceived expectation to rely solely on prayer, as if acknowledging their mental health struggles reflects a lack of faith. Prayer and professional support can work together, helping women navigate life's pressures with clarity, peace, and courage. Seeking help does not diminish your faith.

"Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed." - Proverbs 15:22

This verse emphasises that God intended for us to live in community, support one another, and pursue wisdom. It highlights that God works through people and wisdom as much as through miracles and scripture. Seeking help from a counsellor or therapist is responsible stewardship of the mind, body, and soul, rather than a sign of weak faith.

Breaking the Stigma: Seeking Medical Intervention Is Not a Lack of Faith

One damaging misconception within the church is that mental illness is a sign of spiritual failure, implying a lack of trust in God or weak faith. These misunderstandings force many women to put on what we often call the "church mask," leading to isolation and preventing necessary healing.

Imagine your child breaks their arm: would you pray for your child and refuse to see a doctor? No. You would pray for healing and then take your child to the emergency room, trusting God to work through the skills of the surgeon. The human mind is incredibly complex, an integral part of the body created by God. When it struggles, healing often requires both the supernatural comfort of the Holy Spirit and the clinical wisdom of a trained professional.

Breaking the stigma of mental illness involves recog-

nising it as a serious issue not a moral failing and understanding that seeking help is not spiritual weakness. Faith provides the foundational support. It can then be complemented by therapy, medication, or other forms of assistance. Elijah and David expressed deep emotional pain to God, who responded with compassion. Your vulnerability is welcome in the presence of God.

Practical Steps for Combining Prayer and Professional Support

1. Start With Prayer: Ask God to open your heart to healing and direct you to the right counsellor.
2. Seek Christian Counsel: Search for licensed therapists who integrate faith with evidence-based practices.
3. Use Scripture as a Daily Anchor: Memorise verses that provide peace and reassurance.
4. Practice Healthy Routines: Rest, exercise, sleep, and food all promote mental wellness.
5. Lean on Community: Share your journey with trusted friends, mentors, or support groups.

Women in the church can transform anxiety into assurance and despair into hope by embracing both prayer and professional support, recognising that God equips them to navigate life's struggles with courage and wisdom.

Scriptures to Anchor Your Journey

Prayer is powerful. The Bible offers comfort through emotional and mental health struggles:

- "Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." - 1 Peter 5:7.
- "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God... will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." - Philippians 4:6-7.
- "The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." - Psalm 34:18.



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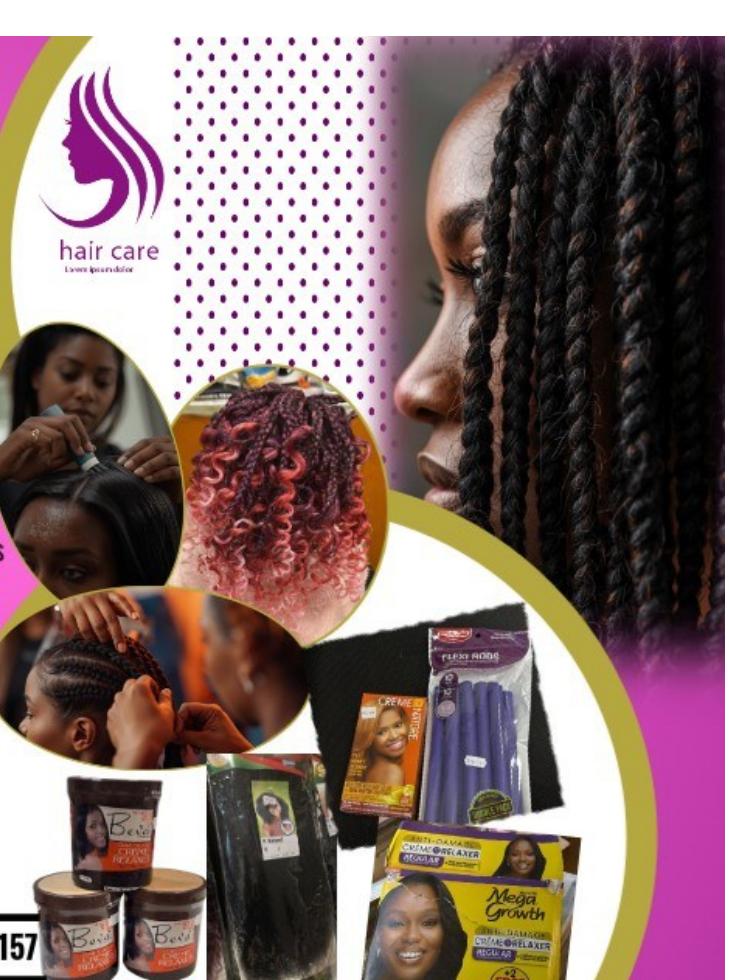
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More details coming soon.

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