

I need some help. Does anyone have at their house a quote that hangs on their walls describing home?

Home is where the heart is.

Anyone can build a house, it takes a family to build a home.

A house is made of bricks and beams, a  
home is made of hopes and dreams.

Home is not a place, it is a feeling.

Home sweet home.

What I love most about my home is who I share it with.

Home is where you learn, laugh, live,  
share, love and forgive.

Home where our story begins.

The Christmas story is full of this image of home.

Joseph brings his family to his hometown, to be registered.  
But even in his home, he has no place in which to return. No  
family with which to stay. No room at the inn. The holy  
family, homeless wanderers, expecting a child – are turned  
away at every turn.

Bethlehem, which means house of bread – ironically provides no home and little, if any, bread. How disappointed Joseph must have felt. All the joy of going home for the holidays (and paying end of the year taxes) was lost.

All of those beautiful quotes about home would mean nothing for Joseph.

This story isn't sweet, or full of hope, or dreams or the best place.

This family is feeling pretty horrible.

This version of home is an abrupt ending, not a beginning.

There is no laughter or heart or joy.

They get no home. Except the home for cows. A stable. And a feeding trough. Not really a home for any human. Let alone the son of God.

Do we ever feel not at home?

I know a lot of people for whom home is not the same this year. The loss of job; a funeral, a forced move from a long term home to new town, or maybe assisted living.

Many things might make this Christmas different from last year's, leaving us empty, hopeless, and disappointed, as Joseph was when he came to what he thought was home. Our lives become disrupted, so we wonder and doubt what home should be. Maybe home isn't good any more.

So what does God do? When we feel out of place, with no home in which to go...

God redefines home. It isn't about extended residence in one place, or where we grew up, but about the story to which we feel we belong. Home is our sense of place and belonging.

God makes a home... for Joseph and Mary, for us for the world.

Not in a city, not in some building confining, and not light years away, but here in this place, in a baby.

God needs no home – because God is home.  
And God gives us Christ as home.

God needs no home – that was clear when the Israelites tried to carry God around in the box of promise, and when David wanted to make a temple for God and God said no.

God is home, and that is where we make our home. Not a church building, but a family of faith.

Our family of origin changes –our sense of home changes – but Christ is changeless. With Christ, in Christ, because of Christ we belong. We are home.

God makes it clear that every being of this world is given a sense of place in God. **“To YOU is born this day.”** God gives this gift straight to us with no strings attached.

God plopped God's self into the middle of a chaotic world, a conflicted region – in the middle of a census - to be the hope and peace and joy for which we yearn.

God came down to us – in Israel – in the tension filled middle east, with a Syrian ruler – to give us a home. A place we could all feel safe, secure, loved, forgiven. God came to bring a divided world together.

During a time that Joseph was denied a home, God created one for all of us shepherds, refugees, immigrants, alike. God has expanded our family to include every child of God under the stars. - Jews, Muslims, Christians, Syrians, Russians, Turks. When Joseph was left disappointed, God brought hope to us all. The promise that God is home for us all – is made loud and clear from those cries from the manger.

When we feel like we have no home. When life changes happen. When we are turned away. When we aren't welcomed – or don't welcome others. When the inn has no vacancy – except the street out front or stable out back – home is born to us.

I realize that this promise of home in Jesus, doesn't provide the tangible needs of shelter and food – but it is a start, it is because we belong in God we are then lead to provide for those who need.

Home is where we are fed the bread of new life, given to drink the wine of compassion. Home is where we are called God's sons and daughters. Home is where we are nourished and gathered and sent... God's home is in worship of course...but home is everywhere God is.

Which means...all those quotes about home are actually pretty spot on. Ponder this in your hearts.

This baby born in the stable – is home – where hopes, and dreams and promises are fulfilled.

In this baby, we will learn to share, forgive, love, laugh, and live.

In this swaddled, crying, bundle we experience joy and peace.

In the darkness –light of the world is born.

In this miracle – our life, our story, our family, our home begins.

Home – God's presence with us, Emmanuel

Home – a place for family to gather, whether around the Christmas tree, or around a cemetery grave.

Home – where God's glory shines on us, where peace is brought to earth.

God makes a home for us in the baby Christ.

Where we have a place; a family.

Where we have hope.

For today, and tomorrow, and for forever.

This Christmas story is a story to which we belong. It is our sense of place.

At Christmas, and throughout the year.

There really is no place like home.