

Equipped to celebrate Easter

Do you like getting new things? There's always something exciting about a new job, new clothes, or a new understanding of something that puzzled us, right? One of the things we associate with Easter, and spring time in general, is new life. For example, new flowers start pushing their way through the soil or new lambs are born at this time of year. Would you like some pointers to help you celebrate Easter in a new way?

Here are some suggestions based on the letters **E-A-S-T-E-R**.

Enter into a **new experience** of Jesus Christ. Perhaps you've been a follower of Jesus for several years and are feeling a bit stale. Now might be a good time to take stock of the quality of your Christian life. For example, are you spending quantity, as well as quality, time in the word of God? Are you applying what you read to your everyday life? Is prayer a normal part of daily living for you? Is it changing the way you think and act? It's not too late to ask Jesus to revitalize your commitment to Him. Why not seriously consider doing so this Easter?

Approach the Easter story through **new eyes**. Imagine encountering the story of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection for the very first time in your life. Try to put away all preconceived ideas as you seek to gain a fresh appreciation of what He did on your behalf. Put yourself in the place of one of the eye witnesses to the crucifixion, for example. What might you have thought or felt? What do you think your reaction might have been if you were one of the first to hear that Jesus had been raised from the dead?

Sing a **new song** to the Lord. Several of the Psalms encourage us to sing to the Lord with a new song. In **Psalm 40:3** the psalmist tells us that the Lord gave him a reason to sing a new song. Read the first two verses of this Psalm to find out what that reason was. What is God doing in your life that could result in you offering Him a new song? What form might that new song take? In practical terms, let's not restrict ourselves to familiar songs of praise to God, but try something different. This could open up a whole new way of praising God!

Take time to read the accounts of the Easter story in **new versions** of the Bible. Perhaps, like me, you have a favourite Bible translation. But, it's a good idea from time to time to read from a new, or less well known, version. This can freshen up familiar passages and make unfamiliar ones easier to understand. Try doing this over the Easter weekend.

Enjoy the company of **new friends** as you celebrate Easter together. Many churches have special Easter services or outreach events. Instead of gravitating towards people you know at these events, why not make a deliberate choice to strike up conversations with people whom you haven't met before but who are also celebrating the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ? This could be the beginning of new friendships!

Remember you are a **new creation** in Christ. If He hadn't been raised after dying on the cross to pay for your sins and mine, there would be no hope of new life for any of us. Jesus came to give new, or eternal, life to all who believe in Him. If this describes you, then you are no longer the person you used to be. You are a new person in Him. Are you living like it?