

**II. Group discussion** *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. We offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement on an answer. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better.*

1. How would you define peace? How is it more than the absence of conflict?

How much does peace depend on pleasant surroundings?

What are some ways that your life is pulled in too many different directions? How does that affect your sense of peace?

What would help us enjoy deeper peace in our lives?

How could remembering our connection to God deepen our sense of peace and wholeness?

Read I Corinthians 12:12-21 aloud.

I Corinthians was written to a church that enjoyed little peace. Even their “communion” service highlighted differences in the community.

2. What are some things we learn when we compare the church to a body?

If Christians saw ourselves as part of a body rather than as independent individuals, how might our actions be different?

How could belonging to a body deepen our sense of peace and wholeness?

What helps you feel connected to other Christians?

3. In verses 14 & 16, what is the situation with the foot and the ear?  
*Inferiority – not as good as others.*

When have you felt this way?

In verse 21, what is the problem with the eye?  
*Thinks too much of itself.*

4. What role does baptism play in the body?

Who baptized you? Who was there?

In what ways is baptism a community event that promotes unity?

What might be some problems when we look at baptism as a solo act by individuals? What is missing if we say baptism is “my decision to make Jesus my personal Lord and savior”?

What are some ways we could renew the idea that baptism is part of joining a community?

5. According to verse 18, what role does God play in bringing the body together?

Why do you believe God brought you to our congregation?

6. If the fruit of the Spirit is peace, what robs us of peace? What keeps us from enjoying the “peace that passes understanding”?  
*Everything revolves around me and my rights.  
I have so many appetites and interests that I am constantly pulled in too many directions.  
Lack of genuine community.*

**III. Cultivating peace** *Practical suggestions and reflections to help participants connect the discussion to their lives. Challenge each person to try at least one of these this week.*

Make a list of all the groups you associate with. How are you different in the different networks? In which groups is your faith most challenged? How does it help you to have other Christians as peers in those groups?

Who do you need to forgive? What is a relationship that is strained because of past mistakes? What steps can you take to bring reconciliation in these situations?

Pray for the unity of the church – in our community and worldwide.

## IV. Other resources

**The point** – The peace of God brings wholeness to our fragmented lives and relationships. This peace is a gift of the Spirit that grows as we walk with God and with other believers

**Prayer.** *Creative suggestions for group prayer.*

- ✓ Pray for relief from fragmented, frazzled lives.
- ✓ Ask for wisdom to focus on the things that matter most.
- ✓ Focus on God and his goodness and the peace he brings.

### Kid-friendly activity

*An activity designed to help kids and adults connect the scripture to their lives. Works best when adults participate in the activity with the kids.*

Offer a prayer of praise for the good things God is doing.

Give each person paper and crayons. Ask them to draw a picture of peace. If this is too challenging for the adults, pair them with a child who can help them imagine how to draw peace.

Share your drawings with the group.

Read Philippians 4:7 aloud.

What does this verse say about the peace of God?

*It is beyond our understanding.  
It can guard our hearts and minds.*

Galatians 5 says the fruit of the Spirit is peace. How can we allow the Spirit to grow peace in our lives?

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### About this series

These lessons are designed to help groups explore the fruit of the Spirit as presented in Kenneson's *Life on the Vine*. They are part of a project sponsored by SaltandLightResources.com involving sermons and group discussions on this material. It would be ideal to connect small group discussion and sermon series, but these lessons are written so that they will be beneficial by themselves.

## Life on the vine: Peace

Small group guide based on

*Life on the Vine*, by Philip Kenneson (IVP, 1999. ISBN 0830822194)

www.saltandlightresources.com

By John Grant, Jon Camp, Trey Finley, and Ben Siburt

**Theme:** How often are you lonely? How often are you embroiled in conflict? How would your group members answer those questions?

Galatians 5 says the fruit of the Spirit is peace. But peace tends to be elusive for many in our culture, even Christians. Why do Christians seem to be just as frazzled and frustrated as their peers? Probably not because the Spirit is weak, but perhaps because we are not cooperating with his work.

**Leadership tip:** Prepare yourself to lead effective meetings. Pray for group members and for God to bless your gathering. Read through the scripture and this guide ahead of time. Pick out 3-5 questions that you think will be most helpful to your group. Arrive early and help your host greet participants.

**I. Relate** *Use a few of these to introduce the theme and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage individuals through these questions.*

- ❖ How many strangers cross your path in a typical day? How many of the people that you see on a daily basis would you count as "close"?
- ❖ How does it affect people in our society to be surrounded by so many strangers and so few close relationships?
- ❖ When do you feel most at peace?
- ❖ As a kid, how often did your family eat meals together? How does that compare to your meals now?