

CoreGroup Guide | Peace - Part 2

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Welcome

Here we are in the second week of our Peace Advent series. Peace in relationships can feel easy until it isn't. Maybe it was a seemingly harmless joke that didn't go over so well, and now everyone is upset or worse - not speaking to each other. Maybe it was something from childhood that seems like forever ago, but the hurt still lingers. Maybe it's a relationship that just feels strained and heavy, but you don't know why. Regardless, the real question is: How does a baby born in Bethlehem help with peace in our families, friendships, or workplaces?

Opening Prayer

Creator,
Be with us this week as we discuss such a big topic - relationships and peace! Hear our prayer and grant us peace as we go down this path today. Give us grace with each other and with those we are in complicated relationships with. Give us clarity in our speech and understanding in our hearts.
Amen.

Ice Breaker

Who was your first best friend as a child? Was it your stuffed animal you told every secret to? Was it the classmate you sat with in school? Or maybe it was a family pet. Do you have a funny story about you and your first best friend?

The Head

The Bible calls Jesus the Prince of Peace, but how does a baby bring peace to this messy world? Before Jesus even arrived, there were complicated relationships surrounding his new family. It's easy to focus on Mary, or the angels, even the shepherds, and what they thought. This week, let's take a closer look at someone often overlooked but close to Jesus: Joseph.

Matthew 1:18-25

18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. When Mary, his mother, was engaged to Joseph, before they were married, she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. 19 Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man. Because he didn't want to humiliate her, he decided to call off their engagement quietly. 20 As he was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child she carries was conceived by the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

22 Now all of this took place so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled:

*23 Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son,
And they will call him, Emmanuel.*

(Emmanuel means “God with us.”)

24 When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife. 25 But he didn’t have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. Joseph called him Jesus.

- Before the angel appeared to Joseph, how was he planning to deal with this complicated situation?
- In what ways have you leaned more towards “keeping the peace” in situations like these?
- How did Joseph’s interaction with the angel of the Lord shift his approach to his relationship with Mary?
- How did Joseph demonstrate mercy towards Mary through this interaction?
- What is the significance of the name Emmanuel (or “God with us”) when it comes to our relationships today?
- Grace is not something often celebrated in our culture. We are a society that thrives on people being combative. Joseph initially looked for ways to avoid a conflict but, in the end, did as God asked. He did it with grace and peace. How do you think being a steward of grace and peace in your relationships could change the world?

The Heart

The holiday season is notorious for straining relationships. All of the togetherness can bring out the worst in us and in the people we love. Or the expectations of what the season should look like can stir up feelings of loneliness and loss.

- How does the holiday season typically impact your most important relationships?
- What are the biggest strains on your relationships during the holidays?
- Where might you need to lean more towards grace and mercy this holiday season?
- What specific relationships in your life are most in need of peace or reconciliation?
- What role does forgiveness play in your attempts to find peace in relationships?

The Hands

Joseph had major hurdles starting his new life with Mary. Even under normal circumstances, merging two people into a marriage is hard. It takes patience and a willingness to create, offer, and uphold peace. We can only imagine the conversations Joseph must have had in the middle of the night with himself about what was happening in his life. To try to create peace from that is amazing. How can we embody Joseph this week?

- Where might God be inviting you to take a first step toward reconciliation or forgiveness with someone?
- What expectations can you adjust this holiday season to help you feel more at peace in your relationships?
- How can your CoreGroup be praying for you this week as you build bridges towards peace in your most strained relationships?

Closing Prayer

Creator,

Thank you for this time together. Thank you for all of the discussion that came out of such a heavy topic. We ask for your help this holiday season as we navigate all of our relationships. Please help us steward them well, help those who need help, offer grace where needed, and speak up when the time is right. Thank you for this group of people and the community we have in one another. Grant us peace as we go on with the rest of our week.

Amen.

Going Deeper

The theme of peace is woven throughout the Bible. Take some time this Advent season to read through the scriptures below. If there is one in particular that really speaks to your heart, spend some time meditating on those words, possibly even committing the scripture to memory. Use this as a spiritual practice to anchor yourself in peace this holiday season.

Scriptures that reference peace:

- Isaiah 9:6
- Psalm 23:1-6
- Psalm 27:1
- Psalm 46:1-3
- Matthew 11:28-30
- Luke 2:14
- John 14:27
- Philippians 4:6-7
- Colossians 3:12-15

From Pastor Charity

Christmas Eve is just around the corner. Time to start thinking about which services you'll attend! Check out the full schedule here: [Christmas Season at The Gathering](#)

Christmas Eve services can only happen with the help of volunteers. Please consider sitting in one service and serving in another. Sign up here: [Volunteer to Serve at Christmas Eve 2025](#)