



# Groups

## Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides!

If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions towards the end of the document.

- These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders.
- Use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group.

## NEW THIS YEAR:

As we enter this new season at Grace Chapel in search for the next Senior Pastor, we invite you to consider the significance of this moment and to incorporate a time of prayer for the search.

## Outline

- I. Introduction and Main Scripture Readings
- II. Group Discussion Questions
- III. Prayer for Senior Pastor Search
- IV. The Journey Resources
- V. Support for the Leader

## How to Use These Study Guides:

1. **Before the meeting:** Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
2. **Check In:** Begin each meeting with a short time checking in with one another.
3. **Read Scripture:** You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
4. **Ask Questions:** Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with and see how the conversation flows.
5. **End with Prayer:** Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

*If your group meets over Zoom:*

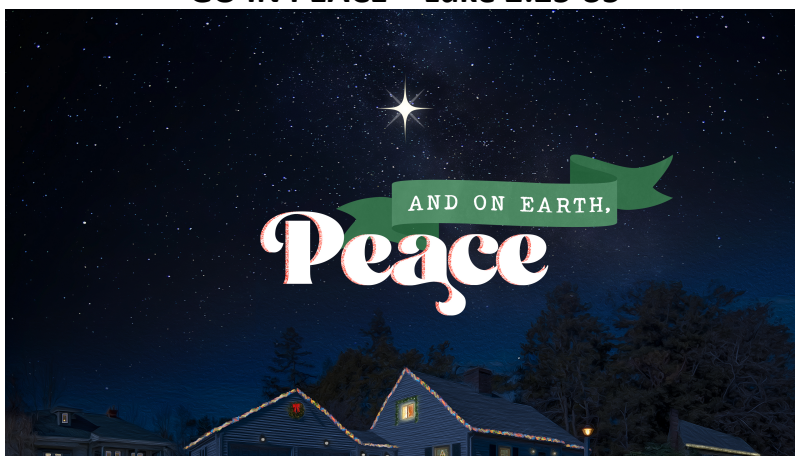
- Expect to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
- Be sensitive to attention spans over zoom. Keep meetings shorter than they would be in person.

**Group Leader Support:**

- Please reach out to your Campus Pastor if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic.
- If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor [Tim Ghali](#) or [Grace Lee](#) from the Group Life team.

**LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE**

for Monologue Sunday given on Dec 17, 2023  
by Pastor Bryan Wilkerson

**GO IN PEACE – Luke 2:25-35****I. Introduction**

Welcome to our Advent Series, “And on Earth, Peace”. First we learned from Pastor Bryan that regardless of your present life circumstances you can find peace in your heart today, there will be peace on earth someday, and we can be instruments of peace every day. Then we learned from Pastor Tim that having experienced the peace of Jesus, we can bring peace to conflict, to loneliness, and to anxiety.

Today is Monologue Sunday, where Pastor Bryan plays Simeon from the Christmas story. This is Pastor Bryan’s last dramatic monologue and we are excited to hear the message he brings. Next week our Christmas Eve Candlelight services (Lexington campus) will be December 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7pm and 24<sup>th</sup> at 11am, 2pm and 4pm. We hope you will be able to join us with family and friends. For more information go to <https://www.grace.org/christmas2023/>.

Questions: How do we wait for God’s promises?

Bottom Line: Because of the Holy Spirit within us, we can wait, believe and help others to believe. God’s plan is not always what we expect, so we must be attentive to our surroundings and people around us in order to perceive the way God is preparing for us.

Let’s begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

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**Main Scripture Readings:**Luke 2:25-35

<sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. <sup>27</sup> Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, <sup>28</sup> Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

<sup>29</sup> "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,  
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

<sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen your salvation,

<sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

<sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and the glory of your people Israel."

<sup>33</sup> The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. <sup>34</sup> Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, <sup>35</sup> so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

## II. Group Discussion Questions:

1. Simeon has been waiting a lifetime to see the Lord's Messiah. Maybe like Simeon, you find yourself in a season of waiting this Christmas – waiting for God to come through or to come near for you or someone you love.
  - In what area are you waiting for God to come through? Either for yourself, a loved one, a community?
  - What are you hoping to witness this Christmas? In the next month? In the next year? in your lifetime?
2. Simeon grows weary and frustrated of the Roman oppression of his people and the daily injustices he witnesses. He laments, *"Lord! You have not kept your word. Your people are hurting, they are dying, they are alone. Where is the One who can save us? Where is the deliverer you promised?"*
  - How would you evaluate your conversations with God? How open are you in sharing your feelings and revealing your honest thoughts? Do you feel close enough to Him that you can share your anger, frustration, disappointment, and doubt?
  - What have been some factors or barriers hindering you from being more open and honest with God?
3. After years of waiting, Simeon changes his perspective: *"I changed, too – as the restless agitation of your turned into something more suited for a long race. Because I gradually realized I had been given not just a promise but a task: the task of waiting; of believing, and helping others to believe."*
  - Could it be that God has given each of us the same task? What are some ways that you can increase in your belief or help others to do the same? What ways can your group bless the faith of others?
4. There are times when Simeon doubt God's promise: *"I could sense myself becoming like Jerusalem: bitter, and doubtful. Why would God have ever spoken to me, anyway? Maybe I –I had wanted too badly to believe."* When we are faced with trials and tribulations, we are all at risk for becoming discouraged and losing hope.
  - Share with your group some of the things that you do to maintain your faith in the Lord and keep waiting.
5. After Simeon comes to realize that the Messiah is a baby he says, *"The Lord is full of surprises. My people have spent generations looking for a warrior. We have spent generations ready to fight. And our God, our creator, sends his champion: the hope of my people, the hope of the world – a tiny, baby boy."* We all have our own expectational positioning system, our own hopes and dreams about where we

would be at certain times in our lives. As Christ-followers, we believe that God has a purpose and a plan for each and every one of us. But God's plans don't always align with our own plans.

- When things don't go your way, how can you open your eyes, ears, and heart to see God's way? How can our group encourage and edify one another during this period of waiting?

### ***Take Home Message:***

We won't have the privilege Simeon had, of holding the newborn Jesus in his arms that day, but we do have the opportunity this Christmas of welcoming him into our hearts once again – to experience the peace that only he can bring, and to share that peace with the world around us.

### ***Let's Pray***

## **III. Prayer for Senior Pastor Search**

During this next ministry year as we navigate transitions, we invite you to secure time during your life group to pray over the search process. Click [here](#) to access the full resource of the prayer guide.

### **Prayers for Preparation of the heart**

- Pray for God to reveal to you the condition of your soul or the work of God's Spirit within you, as you consider your feelings about the Senior Pastor search process.
- Prayer is not just an opportunity to make requests from God, but to listen to what God might want for us during this season of transition. Pause and listen for any invitation from God that he is asking you to enter into.

### **Prayers for the Purposes of God**

- Pray that God will use the people of Grace Chapel in the fulfilling of his mission to further the Gospel message and for us to be people of peace and healing in a broken world.

### **Prayers for the People of Grace**

- Pray that Grace Chapel will seek the Lord as we continue our vision to be a vibrant, growing, multicultural community of seekers and believers, discovering life with God for the good of the world. Pray that we will continue with our mission to make and mobilize more disciples for Jesus Christ in Greater Boston and beyond.

### **Prayers for the Person God's calling**

- Pray that they will have a passion to continue the work the Lord is doing at Grace Chapel and that they will be excited about the opportunities here.
- Pray that the new pastor will have a clear vision for how to minister to the people of Grace Chapel and the surrounding community.

### Prayers for Discernment

- Pray for God's clear direction in how resumes are examined and interviews conducted.
- Ask God to bring the right person to the attention of the committee.
- Pray for the Search Committee to have God's wisdom in all the questions and information they share with the prospective pastor.

## IV. The Journey



*We're all on a journey. Where is yours taking you?*

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it is good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus. It comes from putting them into practice.

Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The **with-God life** of our personal habits and routines;
- The **with-others life** of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The **for-the-world life** that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

### Launching by the end of September: The newly, revised Discipleship Planning Tool

We invite your group to [take the assessment](#) and to spend a session to share about the practice and perspective you chose to focus on for the next three months.

## V. Support for the Leader

These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and opportunities in the life of our church.