

## **WITNESS – Reaching out to others**

*(Aim for 20 – 30 minutes)*

### **Giving Thanks to God**

Give thanks for the times and places where you have known God's peace, or for occasions when he has seen you through times of anxiety.

### **Praying for one another**

Share what is causing you most anxiety at the moment, pray for one another.

### **Praying for our community**

How would our community differ if there was more peace and less anxiety? Pray that as a community we will be full of God's peace.

# FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

3

## ***Isaiah 43:1–7***

### **3 Peace**

*Purpose:* The thrust of this study in Isaiah is to get to know God better, to see that he is always with us no matter what happens to us and that he will love and care for us because we are precious to him. Knowing and trusting this kind of God produces the fruit of peace within us.

*Peace* in the New Testament is related to the Old Testament concept of shalom. It denotes wholeness, well-being and harmony with God and others.

### **WELCOME – Breaking the ice**

*(Aim for 10 minutes)*

When or where have you been aware of God's peace in your life?

### **WORSHIP – Meeting the Lord**

*(Aim for 10 – 15 minutes)*

#### **Pause:-**

- \* Make yourself comfortable,
- \* seek to relax any parts of your body that are carrying stress,
- \* breathe in and out slowly, breathing in God's love and breathing out anything that is not of God,
- \* repeat a prayer phrase like, "Thank you, Jesus" or "My God, my all" or "Jesus, Son of God have mercy on me a sinner".

**Rejoice:-** Listen to a song or read a psalm

**Ask:-** Ask God to speak to you as you study his word

**Yield:-** Surrender to God acknowledging that He is God and you are not and pray that you will put into practice what you believe He is saying to you as you study His word.

## **WORD – Applying the truth**

### ***(Aim for 40 – 45 minutes)***

We live in tense anxious times. Stress-related illnesses have reached epidemic proportions. Nightly news reports give vivid details of the latest power struggles, illicit drug deals, hostage takings and suicides. How can we know the peace of God when the world seems to be falling to pieces? How can we experience the calm, quiet fruit that God's Spirit offers?

Isaiah 43 reveals the love and care of the One whose Spirit lives in us. Israel had sinned greatly by going after other gods and by seeking alliances with heathen powers instead of resting quietly on God. This is why the people found themselves in exile in Babylon (about 540 B.C.). Isaiah 42:23–25 describes something of Israel's sin. Then Isaiah 43 begins: “But now ... ” The time of exile was almost over, and God was ready to bring his people to safety and security.

1. Read Isaiah 43:1–7. What words and phrases indicate God's special relationship with Israel?
2. What dangers might God's people face (v. 2)? If the peace of God does not depend on freedom from adversity (v. 2), on what does it depend?
3. What role then can adversity play in developing peace?
4. How do verses 3–4 foreshadow what God eventually does for his people?

5. If you knew nothing about God except what you learned from this passage, what would you find him to be like?

6. What relation do you see between knowing who God is and being able to receive the peace he offers?

7. Think of the most significant human being in your life, someone you love, trust and understand (and who understands you). How did you get to know this person so intimately?

8. In what similar ways can you get to know God?

9. Consider the things you are anxious about currently. How can knowing God intimately produce his Spirit's peace in you?

*From Fruit of the Spirit by Hazel Offner. Copyright 1987 by Hazel Offner. Published by InterVarsity Press.*