

Discussion Guide for Fruit Group Cluster #4
2021 Fruitful Living Lenten Journey
Faithfulness & Gentleness
Pastor Fritz

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” Galatians 5.22-23

- THANKS EVERYONE for making time to be part of what God is doing in our Fruitful Living Series!
- Thank you, leader, for pulling this Fruit Group together.



Let's Get Started! To warm up, share your name, and if you've ever filled out a bracket for the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament over the years. (Ah, this might be a reminder that the deadline to fill out your Hoops for Haiti bracket is tomorrow/Thursday at noon. Fun! See the COS Thursday email, the COS FB page, or joestelec@comcast.net for links. It's easy and your \$25 donation per bracket makes children in Haiti the real winners. Plus, COS would love to beat the other ELCA congregations in raising the most money and bring the trophy back to PTC. The COS winner gets a free lunch from Pastor Fritz and gets to sign the "basketball of champions" from past years).

Opening prayer: *Thank you, Lord, for gathering us together for our fourth session to explore your Spirit fruits of faithfulness and gentleness. We know our world can be pretty sour at times. Thanks for your plan to use each of us to sweeten it with the Holy Spirit's help. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Discuss:

1. In our daily email devotional on Monday, writer Brad Harris shared all kinds of examples of faithfulness in his life: his marriage, kids, football team, dog, Lord and more. When you think of **faithfulness**, what's an example you treasure?
2. In her sermon, Melissa Jacobson shared she's volunteering at a prayer line ministry. Once a week, she receives the prayers of callers, who both rejoice at good news and plea for God's help during horrible situations. Melissa concluded, "one thing is clear: **faithful** people pray." Your reaction?

3. A few years back, at an ELCA National Youth Gathering, all the participants wore shirts with a quote from Martin Luther on the back: “Our **faith** is a living, busy, active mighty thing.” How do you agree with Luther that faith is a “verb”?



4. One summary of Lutheran theology is this: “we are justified by grace through **faith**.” In other words, we emphasize not good works in the spirit of earning holy brownie points, but live thankful lives of service because of the faith relationship we enjoy with the Risen Christ. We spend our lives unpacking this. Do you agree that **faithfulness** is more powerful than any set of amazing works?

5. The Wednesday devotional speakers, John and Marilyn Lehmann, certainly demonstrate faithfulness in their 60+ years of marriage. But they highlighted the fruit of **gentleness** as a secret ingredient. Your reaction and thoughts?

6. 2 Timothy 2 declares: “The Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, patient, correcting opponents with **gentleness**.” Do we see this advice lived out in our nation these days? (Whoa, for the safety of your group, you better not answer. ☺). How about our own lives? Do you agree that centering yourself in **gentleness** is effective in communicating? Share examples.

7. Is **gentleness** more active or passive?

8. This time of year, our bushes and trees are dormant. They are not “bearing fruit” the way they soon will in spring. Is that ever true for you? Do you bear the fruits of the Spirit more prolifically at certain times of the year? Of your life? Try to explain.

9. If you still have time: Many bushes, grasses, or vines are pruned in order that the fruit may come in stronger. How have any of you pruned your lives or schedules to be more fruitful?

10. Bonus question: Have any of you memorized all nine amazing fruits listed in Galatians 5.22-23? If so, dazzle the group by reciting the list.

Closing Prayer: Dear Lord, thanks again for these holy moments and my “fruit group” friends in Christ. Be with us this week. Steer our schedules so our lives support your purposes and pleasure. We’re honored that it’s your desire to partner with us in making life less of a jungle and more a garden, even if in little ways. Because little ways add up to big differences. Guard and guide us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Thanks everyone!
See you next week!