

Small Group Study Questions: "While We Wait: Don't be Difficult"

Recap the text: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28 and the main themes:

Verse(s)	Main Themes
vv. 12-13a	Don't be difficult—respect leaders
vv. 13b–24	Don't be difficult—keep the peace
vv. 14–15	Relational Peace Keeping
vv. 16–18	Worshipful Peace Keeping
vv. 19–21	Spiritual Peace Keeping
vv. 22-24	Progressive Peace Keeping
vv. 25–28	Closing Statements

Understanding the Message:

Don't be difficult—respect leaders

1. In verses 12-13, Paul instructs the church to respect and esteem their leaders. What three characteristics does he use to describe these leaders?
2. Why is it important that respect and esteem is shown to leaders?
3. Reflect on your own attitude towards church leaders. How well do you respect and esteem those who labor among you? In what ways could you improve in this area?

Don't be difficult—Relational Peace Keeping

4. How does Paul suggest the church should "keep the peace" among themselves? List the specific behaviours he mentions in verses 14-15.
5. Why does Paul start with relationships?
6. Why is relational peace keeping so difficult?
7. Paul encourages the church to "admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all" (v. 14). Which of these actions do you find most challenging, and why?

Don't be difficult—Worshipful Peace Keeping

7. What three attitudes does Paul emphasise for worship in verses 16-18? Why do you think these are important for keeping the peace in the church?
8. How might you prepare for worshipping God the the church gathers?

Don't be difficult—Spiritual Peace Keeping

9. In verses 19-21, Paul talks about not quenching the Spirit and not despising prophecies. How did we define prophecy?
10. How did we define "words of knowledge"?
11. Have you ever given a prophecy or word of knowledge - tell us about it!
12. In the context of the local church gathering, how can we test all things without becoming cynical or resistant?

Quenching the Spirit	Fanning the Flame
Resisting a call to serve	Volunteering in faith
Scoffing at spiritual gifts	Seeking understanding from Scripture
Being jealous or critical of others' gifts	Encouraging and affirming their calling
Avoiding prayer or worship	Pursuing intimacy with God

Gossip and division	Building others up in love
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Don't be difficult—Progressive Peace Keeping

13. What does it mean to abstain from every form of evil? What does it not mean?

14. In what areas of your life do you struggle to "abstain from every form of evil"