



## **Small Group Discussion Guide: We Carry Anxiety**

**Series:** *What We Carry*

**Date:** 10/05/2025

**Scripture:** Philippians 4:4–9 (NRSVUE)

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### **Opening Prayer**

God of peace, You are near. As we speak honestly about what we carry, meet us with gentleness. Guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, and lead us into practices that make room for Your peace. Amen.

### **Introduction & Context**

We all carry something into the room—bags, schedules, expectations—and often, **anxiety**. Paul writes from prison, not denial, and offers a pattern that can move us from anxiety toward peace: *rejoice, remember the Lord is near, pray with thanksgiving, receive peace, refocus attention, and keep practicing together.*

A brief note: Anxiety can be biological, psychological, and spiritual. Seek professional care as needed—there’s no shame in receiving every good gift God provides.

### **Discussion Questions**

#### **1) Naming What We Carry**

- When you hear the word “anxiety,” what do you notice—in your thoughts, body, or habits?
- Where have you seen worry or avoidance show up in your life?

#### **2) “The Lord is near.” (v. 5)**

- How does God’s nearness change (or not change) how you experience anxious moments?
- What helps you remember God’s presence in real time?

#### **3) “In everything... with thanksgiving.” (v. 6)**



- What does adding *thanksgiving* to prayer do for you when you feel anxious?
- Try it aloud: name one current concern and one specific gratitude from this week.

#### 4) “The peace of God will guard...” (v. 7)

- Peace as a *guard* is a strong image. What would it look like for God’s peace to stand at the door of your heart and mind this week?
- Share a time you sensed God’s peace while circumstances were still unresolved.

#### 5) “Think about these things.” (v. 8)

- Which of Paul’s words (true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable) do you need most right now? Why?
- What practical helps (limits on doom-scrolling, daily gratitude, a walk) assist you in redirecting attention?

#### 6) “Keep on doing... and the God of peace will be with you.” (v. 9)

- What have you learned (from Scripture, mentors, counseling) that you can “keep on doing” this week?
- How can our group support one another in practice, not just discussion?

## Practice & Challenge

### From Anxiety to Peace — A Simple Flow (use this daily):

1. **Notice** what you’re carrying (name it to God).
2. **Rejoice** (re-orient to God’s character: “The Lord is near”).
3. **Pray with thanksgiving** (request + gratitude).
4. **Receive peace** (imagine peace guarding heart and mind).
5. **Refocus attention** (Phil. 4:8—name what’s true/good).
6. **Do one small aligned action** (call, boundary, walk, rest).
7. **Repeat—in community.**



### P.A.R. (Pray • Act • Reflect)

- **Pray:** Each morning, pray Phil. 4:4–7 with a breath prayer—Inhale: “*You are near.*” Exhale: “*I trust You.*”
- **Act:** Choose **one** 10-minute daily practice this week:
  - Write 3 specific gratitudes, **or**
  - Slowly read Phil. 4:8 and note one “true/honorable/just...” you observed today.
- **Reflect:** Each evening, ask: *Where did I feel anxiety? Where did I notice God’s peace guarding me? What helped?*

(If anxiety feels persistent or overwhelming, add a step: **reach out** to a trusted friend, leader, counselor, or physician.)

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### Closing Prayer

God of all comfort, thank You that we don’t carry this alone. Teach us to rejoice, pray with thanksgiving, and think on what is true. Guard us with Your peace, and help us keep practicing—together. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

### Key Takeaway

Paul doesn’t shame us for feeling anxious; he gives us a pathway. As we practice it in community, *the peace of God* guards us and *the God of peace* is with us.

*This guide was developed from original content with the assistance of ChatGPT.*