**Guidance for Christians in achieving inner peace**

* New Testament literature reveals an important relationship between an individual's fidelity to the requirements of the gospel and their own sense of peace and wellbeing
* Christians can expect to find inner peace in and through living out their vocation as disciples of Jesus Christ and directing their lives towards the following of his teaching.
* Jesus is regarded as the bringer of peace and to live in close relationship to him and his teaching will allow the follower to experience this peace
* Jesus' life is seen as a model of living in peace
* Christians are encouraged to model their lives on his example in doing so they will be able to find peace

**Integrity and Fidelity**

* Integrity and fidelity to one's vocation fundamental to finding inner peace
* Not possible to achieve inner peace while experiencing turmoil and inner conflict due to compromising personal values
* Jesus faced temptations to compromise his integrity
* These temptations are about serving self or avoiding challenging situations
* Jesus' example shows the importance of being true to the values of the gospel and not being prepared to accept compromise
* Compromise would inevitably erode a sense of inner peace as it amounts to a lack of integrity and will result in inner conflict
* By refusing to be tempted Jesus retains his integrity and is able to faithfully go about his ministry
* Selflessness is a liberating quality which has a significant impact on the capacity to achieve inner peace

**Prayer and Service**

* Ministry of Jesus highlights prayer and service being kept in balance
* Jesus portrayed as a man of prayer who is frequently in communion with God Occasions of prayer are particularly evident leading up to significant moments in Jesus' ministry
* Prayer is a vehicle through which Jesus is able to nurture and sustain the relationship with God which is the source of his wellbeing and inner peace
* Prayer is something which followers of Jesus try to emulate in order achieve this sense of peace and serenity.
* Prayer is not a withdrawal from the events of daily life
* Prayer an opportunity to reflect on events and gain strength to face challenges Jesus' ministry conveys a sense of balance between prayer and contemplation on one hand and active service on the other
* Two elements are seen as complementary, not in competition with one another Prayer is seen as an essential adjunct to the active ministry
* Ministry is seen as a practical expression of the life of prayer
* Prayer enables the Christian to sustain and nurture their relationship with God Through prayer Christians draw meaning and understanding concerning day to day life
* Christians also gain strength and inspiration from prayer to enable them to meet daily challenges
* Service flows out of the contemplative element of prayer
* Understanding gained through prayer and reflection informs and guides the Christian to respond to the call to service
* Strength and inspiration gained through prayer enables Christians to rise to the challenges they may face in serving others.
* Christians are encouraged to find a balance between the contemplative and the active elements of life
* Overemphasis on prayer and contemplation can lead to insularity
* Overemphasis on active service can lead to burn out
* Either of these excesses will undermine the search for an inner peace

**Community**

* Christian community is an important source of help and support
* The unity exists in community assists in the search for inner peace
* Jesus' community of followers shared a great deal of his experience, learned from him and supported him in his ministry
* Elements of sharing, learning and supporting will assist individuals to find a harmony and sense of purpose in community which assists in the search for inner peace and wellbeing
* The absence of community leads to isolation and separation
* The breakdown or disintegration of a community through conflict, disunity etc will also have a negative effect on an individual's sense of wellbeing

**Towards Inner Peace**

* Following the example of Jesus is a fruitful and worthwhile path to find inner peace
* Various groups within the Christian tradition will have established methods of following this example
* These include the use of prayer, ritual and the reading of scripture, the service of others and the participation in community with those of similar beliefs
* A basic orientation in life which supports the quest for integrity and fidelity to the gospel is an important foundational element
* Not be possible to achieve inner peace while values are seriously compromised.
* Maintaining a balance between prayer and service is also fundamental to the quest for a sense of peace and wellbeing
* Both prayer and service are essential and each should support and draw from the other
* Engaging with a local community is also an important element
* Communities provide important occasions of interaction for sharing, for learning and for support
* The absence of meaningful community undermines the possibility of achieving inner peace

**Contribution of Christianity to World Peace**

* The Christian tradition makes significant contributions to world peace at a number of different levels
* These contributions include public statements by Church leaders, programs of action at local and international levels, organisations dedicated to bringing about peace, courses of study, commemorative days etc.

**Public Statements**

* Church leaders have frequently made statements in support of peace
* Some have been specific appeals for peace in particular circumstances however,
* Some have also published more comprehensive statements on the need for peace and the means of achieving it.
* In the Catholic community, one of the more well known statements was the 1963 statement of Pope John XXIII "Pacem in Terris" (Peace on Earth)
* In *Pacem in Terris* John XXIII discusses an issue of critical importance to the establishment of peace
* Other organisations such as the World Council of Churches and individual denominations such as the Society of Friends (Quakers) have also released many public statements relating to peacemaking
* In the months before the beginning of the 2003 Gulf War, Christian Churches in the United States made frequent public appeals to avoid the conflict
* The Society of Friends website contains excerpts from over forty statements from US Churches, many of them representing the views of groups of Church leaders from a particular State or region
* Similar statements were made throughout Europe and the UK
* In Australia statements were made by leaders of most major Christian denominations together with representative statement issued by the National Council of Churches of Australia (NCCA)

**Programs and Organisations**

* There has always been a tradition of opposition to warfare in Church communities
* Francis of Assisi is a famous example of opposition to war. Another interesting example
* The Society of Friends (Quakers), a Christian group with a pacifist stance.
* The modern peace movement has a strong link to Christian peace groups in its infancy.
* Movements such as the Catholic Worker movement led by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin have been prominent in the quest for world peace
* The Catholic worker movement developed an approach of active non-violence and often used civil disobedience as a means of protest.
* Another well known organisation is the international group Pax Christi who have pioneered peacemaking at an international level for decades
* In preparation for the coming of the third millennium, Pax Christi published a manifesto for a culture of peace and non violence.
* This manifesto came in support of the United Nations declaring a decade for a culture of peace and non violence beginning in the year 2000.
* Pax Christi's declaration contained 6 principles which it invited people to take up
* respect the life and dignity of every person without discrimination or prejudice
* practise active non-violence, rejecting violence in all its forms: physical, sexual, psychological economic and social, in particular towards the most deprived and vulnerable such as children and adolescents
* share my time and material resources in a spirit of generosity to put an end to exclusion, injustice and political and economic oppression
* defend freedom of expression and cultural diversity, giving preference always to dialogue and listening rather than fanaticism, defamation and the rejection of others
* promote consumer behaviour that is responsible and development practices that respect all forms of life and preserve the balance of nature on the planet
* contribute to the development of my community, with the full participation of women and respect for democratic principles, in order to create together new forms of solidarity
* The World Council of Churches in launched a campaign of a "Decade to Overcome Violence"
* This campaign provides an ecumenical dimension to the search for peace and highlights the commonalities held among Christian Churches in this area
* The campaign of the Decade to Overcome Violence has also highlighted the statistic that domestic violence is responsible for the deaths of more women worldwide than any other single cause
* Other important organisations include the Church and Peace alliances in Europe and the UK as well as the Kairos organisation in Canada and the USA .
* In Australia major Christian denominations have organisations which have responsibility in working towards peace
* These include the Uniting Church Board of Social Responsibility and the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council
* These organisations, together with the National Council of Churches of Australia have peacemaking as an important part of their mandate
* The element of working towards peace is carried out alongside other social concerns such as justice and ecology
* This highlights the close relationship between the search for a more just society and the search for peace
* Church organisations have frequently stated that the achievement of lasting peace will only be possible with a renewed social order where there poverty is substantially overcome and there is justice among people and between nations

**Courses of Study**

* Throughout the world major learning institutions provide studies in peacemaking. Among these, universities run by Christian denominations often feature prominently in offering such courses
* Some significant organisations providing for the study of peace and peace making include the Washington based Center of Concern and the Maryknoll Justice and Peace Office
* In Australia the Society of Saint Columba (Columbans) have been prominent in providing peace education
* Firstly through their Columban Mission Institute and through their Centre for Justice, Ecology and Peace.
* Courses of study in peacemaking are available at major theological institutes such as the United Theological College and the Catholic Institute of Sydney

**Days of Commemoration**

* Christian Churches have made use of significant days of commemoration to help focus people's attention on the need for peace
* All major denominations will have special liturgical events on Anzac day
* Many would also hold events on other occasions such as Remembrance Day and Hiroshima Day
* Palm Sunday has become a day for public gatherings, marches and rallies in support of peace
* Christian churches have traditionally sponsored these events which usually begin with an ecumenical service followed by a rally and a march through city streets
* Palm Sunday rallies have become a regular feature of life in Australian cities
* The numbers of people attending had tended to fluctuate depending on the world situation at the time
* Very large numbers gathered in 2003 to protest against the war in Iraq
* Smaller, but still quite significant numbers took part in subsequent years