

LEADER GUIDE

# WHEN YOU PRAY

# LEADER GUIDE

Welcome! Before you read any further, we want to say how thankful we are for you, the leader. Thank you for your willingness to dive into Scripture, brew the coffee, place the chairs, and set aside the time regularly to meet with other women.

*When You Pray: A Study of Six Prayers in the Bible* is a video- and discussion-based Bible study from a team of six beloved Bible teachers. Each teacher wrote one week of personal Bible study and teaches one video teaching session. The teaching videos were filmed during a weekend-long Lifeway Women Live event.

Each teacher taught and wrote in her own unique style, so you'll see a rich variety of Bible study methods from session to session. Our goal is for this leader guide to help you pull all of that together in a way that fosters deep conversation and prayer for you and the women you're leading.

We want to encourage you to use this study however it works best for you and your group. If you want to follow this leader guide to the letter, do that! If you want to do your own thing, feel free! We want to give you all the tools you might need, but we are certain God has ordained your time with your specific group in your specific setting.

We are grateful for you and praying for you as you lead this study.

*Lifeway Women*

## **WEEKLY GROUP MEETING: SUGGESTED SCHEDULE**

Seven to Eight Weeks • Meeting Length: 1.5 hours

**WEEK ONE**—Introduction: Distribute Bible study books, get to know one another, and watch the Session One video.

**WEEK TWO**—Kelly Minter: Watch the Session Two video and discuss the Session Two personal Bible study.

**WEEK THREE**—Jackie Hill Perry: Watch the Session Three video and discuss the Session Three personal Bible study.

**WEEK FOUR**—Jen Wilkin: Watch the Session Four video and discuss the Session Four personal Bible study.

**WEEK FIVE**—Jennifer Rothschild: Watch the Session Five video and discuss the Session Five personal Bible study.

**WEEK SIX**—Jada Edwards: Watch the Session Six video and discuss the Session Six personal Bible study.

**WEEK SEVEN**—Kristi McLelland: Watch the Session Seven video and discuss the Session Seven personal Bible study.

**WEEK EIGHT** (optional)—Wrap up and celebrate.

## HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOU PREPARE.

**VIDEO TEACHING.** The videos for this study are available for streaming through the digital access code in the back of each Bible study book. Each video is intended to be viewed after completing the accompanying week of personal study. We strongly recommend you use the teaching videos as a part of this study, but you can still discover truth from Scripture and grow in your walk with God by simply doing the print portion if your setting doesn't allow for video.

**GET THE WORD OUT.** Be sure to advertise the study early and utilize all methods for getting the word out. Post it on your church's website, send emails to potential attendees, and promote it on all forms of social media. It's best to start advertising the study four to six weeks before it begins. The study is seven sessions long, which means you will meet seven or eight times. Visit [lifeway.com/whenyoupray](http://lifeway.com/whenyoupray) for free promotional materials to help get the word out about your study.

**SCHEDULE.** Be sure to make everyone aware of the schedule ahead of time and start promptly each week to honor everyone's time. In your group time, you will view the video teaching together and discuss what you're learning. You'll also be encouraged to spend a good bit of time in prayer.

**STAY IN TOUCH.** Prepare a sign-up sheet with space for names, email addresses, and phone numbers. You may also include information like birthdays, social media handles, and favorite candy so that you can foster community among group members.

**GET COZY.** Make an effort to create a comfortable environment for group meetings. Arrange chairs in a circle to encourage conversation. If your group is large, you may want to watch the video teaching together and then split into smaller groups for the discussion time. If you choose to do so, enlist discussion leaders for each group to keep the conversation moving and focused.

**CHILDCARE.** Be sure to check with participants to see if childcare is needed and organize leaders and space for the children in advance.

**BIBLE STUDY BOOKS.** Each participant will need a Bible study book. Make sure you leave plenty of time for all the books to be ordered and received between announcing and starting your Bible study. Consider offering a scholarship or buy-one-give-one option for those who cannot afford a study book on their own.

**EARLY PREP.** Because this study is a little different from many of our studies, we strongly suggest reading through all of the leader guide before the first session. You may want to think through the different ways this study can be conducted and how it will work best for your group. Make sure you secure a DVD player and TV or whatever equipment you may need to watch the videos. If you don't already know, learn how to work the tech equipment needed or line up assistance to help in that area. We recommend watching the video sessions prior to your meeting, taking note of anything you may want to highlight from the teaching. Look over the discussion questions, as well, so that you are prepared to lead the conversation.

**PERSONAL STUDY.** Between each meeting, there are five days of personal study to complete in the Bible study book. Each of these varies in length due to the different authors for each week's study.

**PRAYER.** Most importantly, be sure to pray for the women who attend the study. And pray for yourself as you prepare to lead. Ask God to draw the women closer to Him as they learn more about the prayers in the Bible that can inspire their own.

We've provided a discussion guide for each session. Remember these are simply suggestions for how to use your time together. We want to empower you as you lead to do what is best for your group!

# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## SESSION ONE

### INTRODUCTION

**WELCOME** women to the study and distribute Bible study books.

**MEET AND GREET** one another! Invite each woman to introduce herself and share basic get-to-know-you information. For an icebreaker, ask each woman to share a language she wishes she could speak and why.

**WATCH** the video "Session One: Introduction." Encourage group members to take notes on the Watch page (p. 12).

Following the video, lead women in discussion through the same questions addressed in the video.

How would you define prayer?

Fill in the rest of this sentence:

When I pray, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

What are some of the obstacles you face in your daily prayer life?

How does Scripture inform your prayers? Is there a Bible passage you pray often?

Share about a time when you saw the power of prayer or when your prayer life shifted in a memorable way.

### **PRAYER REQUESTS**

How can we pray for one another this week?

**CLOSE** the session with prayer.

## SESSION TWO

### YOUR KINGDOM COME

**WELCOME** women to Session Two. For an icebreaker, ask women to share about a hidden talent or something they are surprisingly good at.

**WATCH** the video “Session Two: Your Kingdom Come.” Encourage group members to take notes on the Watch page (p. 44) as Kelly teaches.

**PRAY** the following Bible verse over your group before you begin your teaching time. (Note: As you move through the Bible study book and the Leader Guide, you’ll notice prayer prompts inspired by God’s Word, which are intended to help you build rhythms of prayer into your personal and group Bible study times.)

*“Open [our] eyes so that [we] may contemplate wondrous things from your instruction.”*

#### **PSALM 119:18**

**DISCUSS** the video teaching and personal Bible study, using the following questions and prompts as a guide.

**READ** Matthew 6:9-13 to your group.

Before this week, how familiar were you with the Lord’s Prayer? Share what the prayer has meant to you, or something new that stood out to you as you studied it more closely this week.

What’s one thing Kelly said that stuck with you from the video?

In her teaching, Kelly explained how Jesus reveals the personal, provisional, giving, and good nature of God. Think about your most recent prayers. Which of these aspects of God’s character have you been quickest to acknowledge in prayer? Have any been noticeably absent?



Ask a group member to read Matthew 6:5-8 from Day One of the personal Bible study. Then, encourage a few volunteers to share the responses they wrote down to this question from page 20: *The fact that our heavenly Father already knows what we need before we ask Him brings some of us comfort and others frustration. What is your response and why?*

In Day Two, Kelly pointed out how Jesus's model prayer begins with the attention focused on God's name, kingdom, and will. Discuss how this approach compares to the ways we often begin our prayers. What is different about beginning with God in prayer? What are we saying to God when we pray in His name, for His kingdom and His will?

Reread Matthew 6:11-12. Then, discuss the following questions from the personal study:

What does praying for daily bread mean to you? What does it represent in your life (p. 28)?

What do you think is the significance of Jesus placing daily bread and forgiveness next to each other in His prayer (p. 33)?

Does forgiveness feel as essential to you as your daily needs being met? Why or why not (p. 34)? Draw attention to the John Stott quote and Kelly's comments at the bottom of page 33: "Forgiveness is as indispensable to the life and health of the soul as food is for the body."<sup>1</sup> Just as our physical needs must be met, so our relational ones need tending.

Share something from Day Five (pp. 39–43) that resonated with you as you studied verse 13 of the Lord's Prayer.

1. John R. W. Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7): Christian Counter-Culture*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 149.

What is one key takeaway you have from studying Jesus's model prayer?

### PRAYER REQUESTS

How can we pray for one another this week?

**CLOSE** the session by praying the Lord's Prayer together aloud. If possible, have enough printouts of the prayer available for each group member to have a copy or show it on-screen.

*Therefore, you should pray like this:*

*Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*

### MATTHEW 6:9-13

## **SESSION THREE**

### **MY HEART REJOICES IN THE LORD**

**WELCOME** women to Session Three. For an icebreaker, ask each woman to share her favorite children’s book and why she loves it.

**WATCH** the video “Session Three: My Heart Rejoices in the Lord.” Encourage group members to take notes on the Watch page (p. 78) as Jackie teaches.

**PRAY** the following Bible verse over your group before you begin your teaching time.

*Teach [us], LORD, the meaning of your statutes and [we] will always keep them.*

#### **PSALM 119:33**

**DISCUSS** the video teaching and personal Bible study, using the following questions and prompts as a guide.

**READ** 1 Samuel 1:1–2:11 aloud, dividing the reading among a few volunteers.

What’s one thing Jackie said that stuck with you from the video?

Jackie began her teaching by talking about how petitions are often the first prayers we learn to pray. Why do you think this is the case? What does it communicate about our view of prayer?

Ask a group member to read Matthew 7:7-11 from Day One of the personal Bible study (p. 51). Then, encourage a few volunteers to share the responses they wrote down to these questions from page 52: *What’s the significance of recognizing God as Father in relation to petition? How does the way you address God affect the way you approach Him in prayer?*

Share something from Day Two (pp. 56–60) that resonated with you as you studied the “problem” Hannah brought before the Lord in prayer in 1 Samuel 1. Were you surprised by anything specific you learned in your study? Encouraged? Challenged?

Look together at the “When You Pray Today” closing activity to Day Three on page 65. Encourage your group by sharing a pattern of petition from your own life and then invite them to share as well. If your group is large, consider splitting up into smaller groups of three to four people.

Discuss the following question from Day Four (p. 69): *Consider how Hannah addressed God and how she referred to herself. What was happening in Hannah’s heart, and how was that influencing the way she prayed?*

In Day Five, Jackie emphasizes the link between petition and gratitude. What did you learn about thankfulness in prayer from this day of study? What did you list in your response to the following question on page 73: *How can we cultivate a heart that loves the Giver more than the gift? List some specific ways you can do this in prayer.*

What is one key takeaway you have from studying 1 Samuel 1:1–2:11 as prayers of petition and thanksgiving?

### **PRAYER REQUESTS**

How can we pray for one another this week?

**CLOSE** the session with prayer. Take time to voice prayers of petition for each request mentioned in response to the last question. If everyone in your group is comfortable with praying aloud, pray for the person seated to your left. If your group is large, split up into smaller groups for this closing time of prayer.

## SESSION FOUR

### YOUR WORKS ARE WONDROUS

**WELCOME** women to Session Four. For an icebreaker, ask each woman to share her dream vacation.

**WATCH** the video “Session Four: Your Works Are Wondrous.” Encourage group members to take notes on the Watch page (p. 106) as Jen teaches.

**PRAY** the following Bible verse over your group before you begin your teaching time.

*Help [us] understand your instruction, and [we] will obey it and follow it with all [our] heart.*

#### **PSALM 119:34**

**DISCUSS** the video teaching and personal Bible study, using the following questions and prompts as a guide.

**READ** Psalm 139 aloud, dividing the reading among a few volunteers.

What’s one thing Jen said that stuck with you from the video?

Jen highlighted how verses 1-4 adore God for His omniscience, His all-knowing nature. Discuss your responses to the following questions from page 86: *How is the truth that God knows all things—including our habits, thoughts, location, and words—a deep source of comfort for us? How does it change the way we view ourselves and how much we know? How should it change the way we pray?*

Reread Psalm 139:5-6 to your group. What are the two attributes of God David emphasizes in this part of his prayer?

How is the truth that God is eternal a deep source of *comfort* for us (p. 89)? How is the truth that God is omnipresent a deep source of *comfort* for us (p. 91)? How does each impact the way we pray?

Look at Psalm 139:13-16 in the text you marked on pages 104–105. What words did you underline in green that describe God’s creative work?

Encourage a couple of women to share what they wrote down in response to the following questions on page 95: *How is it good news that God is unlimited? How is it good news that God is bigger than human understanding?*

Now, look at Psalm 139:19-22. David now turns from adoration to petition. But what he asks for is, at first glance, unexpected and disorienting to our modern ears. How are we to learn from David’s cries of hatred and calls for bloodshed (p. 97)?

What is one key takeaway you have from studying Psalm 139 as a prayer of adoration?

### **PRAYER REQUESTS**

How can we pray for one another this week?

**CLOSE** the session with prayer. Review the attributes of God from Psalm 139 (p. 103). Designate a different group member to voice a prayer of adoration focused on each of the attributes.

## SESSION FIVE

### HOW LONG, O LORD?

**WELCOME** women to Session Five. For an icebreaker, ask women to name a song or Bible verse they go to when they feel sad.

**WATCH** the video “Session Five: How Long, O Lord.” Encourage group members to take notes on the Watch page (p. 138) as Jennifer teaches.

**PRAY** the following Bible verse over your group before you begin your teaching time.

*[We] call with all [our] heart, answer [us], LORD. [We] will obey your statutes.*

#### PSALM 119:145

**DISCUSS** the video teaching and personal Bible study, using the following questions and prompts as a guide.

**ASK** for a volunteer to read Psalm 13 aloud.

What’s one thing Jennifer said that stuck with you from the video?

In the video, Jennifer walked us through three “stepping stones” on the path of lament—“I feel,” “I need,” and “I will.” Do you find yourself standing on any of these stones today? Which one is hardest for you to step off of when you’re grieving?

In Day One of the personal study, Jennifer wrote: “God isn’t waiting for you to get your emotional act together so you can come to Him with a tidy presentation of trust and rejoicing” (p. 115). Do you agree? If this is the case, how does that impact the way we pray?

Discuss together your responses to the following questions from Day Two on page 118.

*Think about the truth that God invites you to process your pain with Him. Is that a regular part of your prayer life? Why or why not?*

*What does that truth reveal to you about God? About the relationship He wants to have with you?*

On page 125, Jennifer explains how the psalmists groaned about God's ways. Invite a group member to read Psalm 22 aloud. Discuss the differences between lamenting and complaining. Talk through the key phrases you underlined in Psalm 22 that distinguish it as an example of lamenting rather than complaining.

Share responses to the following question from page 129: *Many of the events and situations in our communities, nation, and world should draw us to humble, unified prayer. What are some current events or situations that come to mind that you feel we as God's people should lament together?*

Read Habakkuk 3:17-19 aloud to your group. Then, encourage anyone who feels comfortable to read the lament declaration she wrote on page 136. Begin by sharing your own.

What is one key takeaway you have from studying biblical prayers of lament?

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

How can we pray for one another this week?

**CLOSE** the session with prayer, using the "When You Pray Today" prayer prompt from Day Four (p. 131) as your guide: Join your Bible study sisters in communal lament using Daniel 9 or another psalm of lament. Remember, there is no one way to lament in prayer. Just let Scripture prompt your words, and you'll experience the purpose and power of lament.



## SESSION SIX

### MAY YOU BE FILLED

**WELCOME** women to Session Six. For an icebreaker, ask each woman to answer this question: If you had a talk show, whom would you invite to be your first guest to interview and why?

**WATCH** the video "Session Six: May You Be Filled." Encourage group members to take notes on the Watch page (p. 170) as Jada teaches.

**PRAY** the following Bible verse over your group before you begin your teaching time.

*Make your face shine on your servant[s], and teach [us] your statutes.*

#### **PSALM 119:135**

**DISCUSS** the video teaching and personal Bible study, using the following questions and prompts as a guide.

**ASK** for a volunteer to read Ephesians 3:14-21 aloud.

What's one thing Jada said that stuck with you from the video?

In the video, Jada emphasized, "We are called to intercede because Jesus Christ intercedes for us. He stands between us and the Father, not just once at salvation, but over and over and over again. He stands between us and the Father, and He has called us to cover one another with the same passion that He covers us." What does it mean to you to have Jesus interceding on your behalf before God the Father? Do you pray like this is what's happening? Explain your thoughts.

Take a few minutes to share responses to this question from Day One on page 144: *What are some general conclusions you can make about intercessory prayer [from Jesus's examples]? How do you know it makes a difference?*

Reread Ephesians 3:14-16 to your group. What did you learn this week about the strength and power of God (Day Two)? How does this truth impact your prayers?

Ask a group member to read Ephesians 3:17-19 aloud. Then, invite women to discuss ways these verses challenge them to pray for others (p. 159).

Share something from Day Four (pp. 160–164) that resonated with you or taught you something new about prayer.

Discuss responses to the chart and this question from Day Five (p. 168): *What stands out to you from Paul's example of intercessory prayer?*

What is one key takeaway you have from studying intercessory prayer?

### **PRAYER REQUESTS**

How can we pray for one another this week?

**CLOSE** the session with prayer. Using the list of topics on page 169 as a guide, divide your prayer time up into three sections. Guide your group through a time of intercession.

## **SESSION SEVEN**

### **MAY THEY BE ONE**

**WELCOME** women to Session Seven. For an icebreaker, ask each woman to answer this question: If you could invite three people over for dinner, whom would you invite and why?

**WATCH** the video "Session Seven: May They Be One." Encourage group members to take notes on the Watch page (p. 202) as Kristi teaches.

**PRAY** the following Bible verse over your group before you begin your teaching time.

*LORD, please accept [our] freewill offerings of praise, and teach [us] your judgments.*

#### **PSALM 119:108**

**DISCUSS** the video teaching and personal Bible study, using the following questions and prompts as a guide.

**ASK** for a volunteer to read John 17:20-21 aloud.

What's one thing Kristi said that stuck with you from the video?

During her teaching, Kristi shared the story about her church community rallying around a family going through cancer treatment and loss. Encourage a couple of women to share their own stories about a time when they felt the powerful support and love of Christian community. You may want to ask for volunteers in advance so they are prepared to share their stories.

Share something from Day One (pp. 175–179) that resonated with you or taught you something new.

Discuss responses to this question from Day Two on page 184: *What are one or two ways this familial aspect of eternity can shape your prayers for others? Your prayers for the church?*

Read John 15 and spend a few minutes talking about the imagery of the vine. What does this imagery teach you about your relationship with God? Your relationship with one another?

Encourage a few group members to share their responses to this question from Day Four on page 194: *Think about a time when you sensed the Spirit of God groaning for you when you did not have the words to pray. What stands out as you reflect on that time? Begin by sharing your own response.*

Reflect on what it means to be unified in Jesus. How does this impact our prayer lives? Our ministry to a watching world?

At the end of Day Five on page 201, Kristi had you write down two takeaways you have about prayer from Jesus's prayer in John 17. Split up into pairs or small groups and talk through those takeaways together.

### **PRAYER REQUESTS**

How can we pray for one another this week?

**CLOSE** the session with prayer. Use the responses to the last two questions as your points of emphasis for your closing prayer time. Stay in your small groups for prayer.

## OPTIONAL WRAP-UP

Welcome women to your wrap-up celebration. Begin with a time of food and fellowship.

Discuss the key truths you're taking away from the study. Consider questions such as:

What has encouraged you as you've evaluated and reflected on your prayer life over the past several weeks?

What is one new prayer practice you plan to incorporate into your daily prayer habits?

How can we encourage one another to be intentional and committed to prayer over the coming weeks and months?

Practice your Scripture memory together.

Pray together. Since this is a study on prayer, it's only fitting to end by doing just that. Guide the women in your group through the following:

### PRAYER PROMPTS

Begin your prayer time by reciting the Lord's Prayer together—Matthew 6:9-13.

Now, open the floor to prayers of adoration. Encourage women to voice aloud statements of praise to God for who He is and how they see Him at work in their lives and in the world.

Move to a time of petition. Invite the women in your group to pray silently, voicing their needs and concerns to the Lord.

Pray Psalm 13 aloud over your group. Then, ask a few volunteers to share their own prayers of lament. (Consider asking volunteers in advance for this part of your prayer time.)

For a time of intercessory prayer, distribute index cards to each woman. Have her write her name on the card and write down any urgent prayer needs from her own life. Then, direct women to exchange cards. Take a moment to pray silently for the concerns on the cards they received. Have each woman take the card with them and continue to intercede for one another during the week.

**CLOSE** your time of prayer by inviting five volunteers to pray for unity in the following areas—your group, your church, your homes, your local community, and the global church.

### **TIPS**

You can encourage individual prayer, praying aloud in a large group, or praying in small groups, depending on what makes the most sense for your meeting environment and individual personalities. We've given some recommendations but encourage you to adjust these as needed to work well for your group.

You might also consider asking different group members to lead each section of prayer time. (If you do this, we recommend asking them in advance!)

Spend a set amount of time praying through each prompt. Set a timer if you need to. You want to make sure your group stays focused and is able to move through each aspect of prayer together.

Stay in touch. Just because your *When You Pray* study is over doesn't mean your friendships have to be! Come up with a plan for staying in touch, plan your next Bible study, and continue to pray faithfully for the women in your group.