

Elizabeth Laing Thompson

When God
Says
wait



Small Group Discussion Guide

When God Says *Wait*

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by Elizabeth Laing Thompson

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A note from the author:

Hi, friends,

Waiting is so much easier when you have people walking beside you! I am forever thankful for the friends who have kept me company—and kept me sane—through my waiting seasons. Working your way through *When God Says “Wait”* in a discussion group is a wonderful way to build a support system to see you through your wait. Please know that I am praying for you! I pray your times together yield meaningful growth, true comfort, and lasting friendship. I pray you feel secure enough to share your fears, safe enough to mourn your losses, and loved enough to confess your struggles. I pray you mingle laughter with tears. I pray the coffee never runs dry and the tissues never run out!

Three discussion questions are provided to accompany each chapter in *When God Says “Wait.”* You can discuss one chapter at a time or combine two or three—whatever works for your group’s schedule and chattiness level! Before each meeting, ask everyone in the group to read the chapter(s) you will be discussing. Each discussion also offers an optional “Waiting Room Warm-Up” activity. These ideas provide practical ideas for incorporating what you are learning into your daily life. They are meant to be helpful and fun suggestions, not burdensome duties, so use them however you choose!

Please know that you are always on my heart and always in my prayers.

Yours,

Elizabeth

BEFORE THE FIRST DISCUSSION:

WAITING ROOM WARM-UP

The waiting room warm-ups are optional activities.

Take some time to write down where you are, mentally and emotionally, at this point in your waiting season. How are your faith, your friendships, and your joy? Now write down where you would *like* to be: Who do you hope to become through your wait? What do you want your faith, your friendships, and your mood to be like? Pray through the things you have written down.

-Notes-

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, CHAPTER 1

Wait Is a Four-Letter Word

1. What are you waiting for right now, and what is the hardest part of waiting for you?
2. What specific questions about faith, God, or God's promises do you hope to resolve while reading this book and attending this group?
3. What personal growth would you like to experience as you read this book and attend this group? How would you like to feel? Who do you hope to become?

WAITING ROOM WARM-UP

Ask a Christian friend to meet for coffee this week. (It doesn't have to be coffee—it can be lunch or ice cream or whatever—but conversations always go better with coffee. Just saying.) Use the opportunity to be open about your own waiting journey and to focus on giving to your friend—to find out what's going on in her life, discover what she is waiting for, and learn how you can encourage her.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, CHAPTER 2

Pitfalls on Road Trips

1. Which waiting pitfall is most tempting for you (bitterness, selfishness, self-reliance, doubt, manipulation, cynicism, envy, self-pity, faithlessness, depression)? How does that pitfall make its appearance in your heart or actions?
2. How can we tell the difference between taking faithful, godly initiative while we are waiting, as opposed to taking over and taking control in an ungodly way (like Sarah did)?
3. Describe a time when you've been tempted to take charge of your life in an ungodly way. What did you learn about God and yourself through that time?

WAITING ROOM WARM-UP

Find a prayer partner who is also experiencing a time of waiting. Set up a time to pray together as consistently as you can—once a week is a great goal.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, CHAPTER 3

Survival Skills for Spiritual Waiting

1. What survival skill do you most need to develop during this waiting season (worship, prayer, fun, self-reflection, service, laughter), and how can you begin to develop it?
2. What has your experience with social media been like during your wait? What changes have you already made in how you handle social media—or what changes do you want to make?
3. Encourage one another with the scriptures that are helping you through this waiting season.

WAITING ROOM WARM-UP

Take a day or a week off of social media. (Breathe slowly, don't panic. This is optional. Heh heh.) Take some time to journal afterwards: How did you feel about your time away? What did you learn about yourself? How was your walk with God different? What adjustments do you want to make to your social media habits going forward?

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, CHAPTER 4

Lies About Waiting

1. Which lies about waiting have you most been tempted to believe, and why?
2. When you imagine God's assessment of how you are handling your wait, what do you think He thinks about you? How do the words in your head compare to what scripture says God thinks and feels about you?
3. How will it transform your waiting season (your perspective, your mood, and your self-esteem) if you truly come to believe that God is not punishing you or angry with you? If you truly come to believe that God loves and likes you?

WAITING ROOM WARM-UP

Find three scriptures that speak to your heart in this time of waiting. Write them down and keep them with you to read whenever faithlessness starts creeping in.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, CHAPTER 5

When Prayer Becomes a Battleground

1. How would you describe your prayer life during this in-between time? Have you found it harder than usual to connect with God—if so, why?
2. How do you feel towards God right now? What feelings do you need to work through so you can remain close to Him in prayer? (Examples: insecurity, anger, disappointment, fear that God doesn't care, etc. See the list on pp. 80–81.)
3. What qualities of David's prayer life would help you develop a more intimate, meaningful relationship with God? (Examples: passion, honesty, surrender, gratitude, and praise.)

WAITING ROOM WARM-UP

Find a psalm that describes how you feel about your waiting season and gives you the words you need to pray. (The prayer prompts at the end of each chapter are great options.) Read the psalm you choose in several Bible versions to give you a fuller understanding of its meaning. Pray through your psalm every day this week. There are many ways to pray through a psalm: You can simply read it to God. You can also read a verse or two, pause to add your own thoughts, then read the next verse, and so on, all the way to the end.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Squeaky Wheels and Little Old Ladies

Jesus has spent years, a lifetime, preparing Himself for this night, this sacrifice. . .but here in the final moments, *Jesus asks God to change His mind*. He pleads, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.”

Jesus knows God probably won't say yes—*can't* say yes, however much He may want to—but even so, *Jesus has the conversation.*

What does Jesus' Gethsemane prayer reveal about the nature of God and His relationship with us? How does this affect the way you view God and approach Him in prayer?

2. Describe a time when you have been persistent in prayer. How did you feel towards God during that time, and how did the situation resolve?

3. For better or worse, how has your waiting journey already changed you?

What scars do you carry from waiting? What blessings?

WAITING ROOM WARM-UP

Find a special place with God—a place where you can enter His presence and bring Him your heart. A place you look forward to going to meet with your Father. Jesus had Gethsemane—where can you go?

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, CHAPTER 7

The Friends Who See You Through

1. What challenges have you faced in your relationships during this waiting season? Who is your “go-to” relationship, and how is that going?
2. What aspect of waiting is most difficult for you to be open about with friends and family?
3. How would you describe your support system now? If you need to expand your support system to get you through this season, how can you do that?

WAITING ROOM WARM-UP

Make a list of friends who are also going through a time of waiting, and begin praying for them regularly. You might also make a prayer list of friends who have already received the thing you are waiting for! (This practice protects your heart from bitterness and envy.)

[illegible]

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, CHAPTER 8

Finding Joy in The Journey

1. Let's talk about rules we have set for our own joy. Fill in the blank with some of your own "rules":

I can't be happy until...

I won't be fulfilled unless...

My life doesn't count unless...

How can you rewrite that rule to allow yourself to reclaim joy and contentment?

2. How have you seen God taking care of you during this waiting season?

What "unexpected ice cream" (unforeseen blessings that ease the pain of waiting) have you received from God?

3. What brings you the most joy in your life right now?

WAITING ROOM WARM-UP

Pay attention to little encouragements God sends you each day to show you His love and ease the pain of your waiting season. (We're talking about small things here: a card in the mail, free lunch for no reason, even getting that parking space you prayed for!) Spend a week writing them down every night before bed, and thank God for them again the next morning.

[illegible]

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, CHAPTER 9

When Faith Starts Fading

1. What doubts or questions have you struggled with while waiting? What scriptures and counsel are helping you work through those questions?
2. What can and should we expect God to give us? What should we *not* expect God to give us?
3. How do you define being blessed by God? Even though you are waiting, how is God blessing you right now?

WAITING ROOM WARM-UP

What is your number one doubt or question? First, open up a dialogue about that question with God: speak humbly and honestly with Him about it, and ask for His help in resolving it. Second, begin assembling a list of scriptures that address the topic and help you resolve your question. Add to the list over time, keeping it handy and reading through the verses often.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, CHAPTER 10

1. Jesus promised, “Whoever loses their life for me will save it” (Luke 9:23).

2. How can you take back this time for God? How do you want to give and serve during your time in life's waiting room?

3. When you look back on this season years from now, who do you want to say you became as a result of this suffering?

WAITING ROOM WARM-UP

Find a way to give and serve someone else this week. Your service can be as simple as making an encouraging phone call or mailing a card to a friend.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, CHAPTER 11

The Gifts Waiting Gives Us

1. Describe a time of grief when you felt as though Jesus was standing with his arms around you, comforting you. What did He do for you? How did you feel?
2. How have people or God shown you extra love during this season? What special blessings or miracles have you received?
3. Imagine yourself five years from now, looking back on this time in your life. What do you think you will be grateful for, and how will you say this time changed you?

WAITING ROOM WARM-UP

Spend time this week praying through your life, thanking God for blessings and miracles He has already given. Thank Him for providing in times of need. Thank Him for times when He has stood beside you in your grief, comforting you and letting you cry. Thank Him for seeing you through this time. And thank Him in faith for blessings and miracles yet to come.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS, CHAPTER 12

When God Says Yes, No, and Keep Waiting

1. This book often repeats the phrase, “God sees. God hears. God cares.” How do you see these truths at work in your life? In what specific ways have you noticed God seeing, hearing, or caring for you?
2. Tell the story of a time when God told you yes, no, or surprise! What did you learn from the answer He gave?
3. What’s the biggest spiritual change you have made (or want to make) while reading this book? If you could change one thing today about how you are waiting, what would it be?

WAITING ROOM WARM-UP

Write down how you plan to turn back to thank God (Luke 17:15) if He says yes to your prayer. Read it to God in prayer, just as Hannah told God how she planned to thank Him if He ever gave her a son (1 Samuel 1:10–11).

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