



## GROUP GUIDE: TWELVE LESSONS FOR PRAYER SISTERS

### Introduction

So...your group is eager to get started. Now what do you do? This Group Guide is designed to help you move down the path together as Prayer Sisters. It consists of twelve short lessons to read aloud at the beginning of your first twelve meetings. Each lesson is short, on purpose, so you can get to prayer quickly.

The objective of this book is to coach and prepare you for the adventures that lie ahead. Picture it as experienced Prayer Sisters joining you for your first few sessions, offering suggestions and answering questions. You will read stories from my own Prayer Sisters that serve as examples for your group. I pray you learn from our mistakes and benefit from our advice.

If you haven't already done so, before you begin this guide, take a few minutes to work as a group through the Quick Start booklet. It contains simple and important steps to help you get started successfully. This Group Guide is step two on your Prayer Sisters path. Once you've finished this book, you are ready to meet on your own. However, we are always available should questions or situations arise and you need just a little help from a "sister."

I pray you will find that being a Prayer Sister is one of the most fulfilling choices you've ever made. As one Prayer Sister said, "This is what my life has needed." May your needs for friendship and prayer support be met, and may you grow in your understanding of the fullness of God's love for you as you pray together.

In sisterly prayer,

*Kathy Groom*

Founder and President

Prayer Sisters International



**"...they raised their voices together in prayer to God." Acts 4:24**

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Prayer Sisters International is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that helps women connect in prayer.  
[www.prayersisters.org](http://www.prayersisters.org)

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## Personal Agreement Form

### Personal prayer:

*Dear Lord,*

*As I begin my journey as a Prayer Sister, I ask you to help me be the trustworthy and dependable prayer partner my friends will need. Help me to make praying with my Prayer Sisters a priority and to diligently press through inevitable obstacles that might try to prevent our praying together. Please help me to pray for my Prayer Sisters earnestly and help me to be openly honest with them as I share my own prayer needs. Also, I ask you to help me respect my Prayer Sisters by not judging them, and by keeping their prayer requests confidential. I trust you to protect us as we pray and I eagerly look forward to deepened friendships, many answered prayers, and strengthened faith.*

*Amen.*

*Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

*Date* \_\_\_\_\_

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## Facebook/Prayer Sisters International

Join our growing network of Prayer Sisters on Facebook.

Together we are developing a community of Prayer Sisters around the world!





## Getting Started

The following suggestions are for your first Prayer Sisters meeting—you know, that very first “get to know you” get-together! These ideas apply whether you are introducing the Prayer Sisters vision for the first time, or your group is already committed and ready to get going.

### Ideas for your first meeting:

- Pray—get your group started by praying at the beginning of your meeting. This will set up an ongoing pattern of making prayer your first priority as you begin to meet regularly. Also, as your gathering ends, pray for needs mentioned during the meeting.
- Snacks are optional for this first get-together. Simple refreshments may actually help create a relaxed atmosphere and promote friendly conversation for women just getting to know one another.
- Refer to the *Prayer Sisters Quick Start*, and/or our website [www.prayersisters.org](http://www.prayersisters.org), to help describe Prayer Sisters.
- Ask questions to stimulate deeper discussion:
  - Tell about a time in your life when you wish you’d had friends to pray with.
  - List and describe three current prayer requests.
  - Describe how being a Prayer Sister might help you personally.
- Establish a schedule, including meeting location.
- Decide together how you want to handle prayer requests, child care, and any other issues that need to be discussed. Especially discuss confidentiality, and whether or not prayer requests may be shared with family members. If desired, you may write an agreement form to refer to occasionally as a reminder of your group’s policies. (See the *Prayer Sisters Quick Start* for several helpful tips.)
- If desired, take this time to download Prayer Sisters books for each member of the group. See our website [www.prayersisters.org](http://www.prayersisters.org) for details.
- Exchange personal contact information.
- Review plans for the next meeting so everyone can look forward to your next get-together!



## Lesson 1

### Benefits of Praying Together

Prayer can be difficult for a scatterbrained person. I know...because there are days when I posture myself to pray and within minutes I'm mentally planning the evening meal or scrutinizing the cover of the magazine lying on the floor beside me. My mind wanders.

That doesn't mean my prayers are not important to me. On the contrary. I am desperate to have the Lord hear my pleas, and my inability to stay focused adds to my anxiety.

But, oh, how different my prayer times are when I'm interceding with my Prayer Sisters. The power of agreement fills the room as we bow our heads together. I am intrigued, blessed and encouraged as I listen to my friends pray passionately for all of our needs. God's promise to be with us energizes us as we pray and I find myself praying more fervently, more powerfully, and more attentively.

Praying with my friends keeps me on task, but their prayers do so much more than that for me. They encourage my discouraged heart. They comfort my weary soul. They bring hope to my weakened faith. My Prayer Sisters boost power to my prayers.

Once when my teenage son was going through a particularly difficult time, my friends supported me in a special time of prayer. Instead of our regular prayer position (i.e. lounging in the family room with steaming cups of tea or coffee in hand), we gathered among the clutter in my son's bedroom. (Imagine the condition of a teen boy's room and you can admire the commitment of my friends!) We scooped up dirty clothes and pushed aside mysterious piles of stuff to make room for us to sit on the floor. Holding hands, my friends began to intercede for my troubled son. My heart swelled with hope as my Prayer Sisters shared my burden in prayer.

As your group prays today, celebrate the benefits of praying together. Take comfort in the fact that you are lightening one another's prayer loads. By sharing your burdens, you can relish the promise that God is with you and that He is listening. And be encouraged that praying together improves your concentration and the effectiveness of your prayers!

### Scripture

If one falls down, his friend can help him up, but pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up. (Ecclesiastes 4:10)



**Begin to Pray...**

*Father God,*

*Today we come to you together, united as a powerful force. We are in agreement that our hope and strength are found completely in you. It is not by our own determination that our prayers are answered or victories won. Rather, your mighty power comes to our rescue time and time again. We rely on you.*

*Sometimes we get tired and weary; our burdens become heavy. But together we lift them to you, the loads are lighter as we share their weight. Forgive us for hanging onto them longer than we should have. Search our hearts to make sure we're not harboring anything that might prevent your will from being accomplished in our prayers.*

*Thank you for all of our prayers that you have already answered. And thank you for listening to us today as together we lift up to you all the concerns that are heavy on our hearts as we pray...*

**Journal** (Record group requests and answers)

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**Personal challenge:**

When I am feeling discouraged and unable to pray, I will contact my Prayer Sisters and ask them to pray for me.

**Group Question:**

What can we do to help eliminate distractions and enter into a concentrated time of diligent prayer?

**Sisterly Advice**

**...on Prayer Support**

If you are faithful to your confidentiality agreement, it will build the trust needed to share personal prayer requests openly and honestly. Your prayers will be more real and supportive as a result.



## Lesson 2

### Risky and Rewarding Relationships

As a young woman struggling with the demands of motherhood and marriage, I clung intently to the wise counsel of my mentor and sister-in-law, Rita. It is some of the best advice I've ever received.

**“Surround yourself with godly, growing women,”** she encouraged me.

I took her words to heart and joined a prayer group with some of the most vibrant Christian women I knew. Eventually we started calling ourselves Prayer Sisters and more than ten years later we are still meeting regularly to pray. I am a better person and more effective intercessor because of these awesome girls in my life.

So, I was surprised when one of my long-time praying buddies admitted recently, “I almost quit Prayer Sisters in the beginning.”

“Really? Why?!”

“Because I thought my issues were way beyond what these people could understand,” she confessed. “I had this inferiority thing going on and I was afraid I could never be where they were. I wondered, *Can I really be real? What will they think?*”

I had no idea. I admire this woman and have great respect for her walk with God. In fact, I'd say she's pretty darn near perfect. But, you know what? I have the feeling my friend isn't the only one who has felt insecure. I mean, have you ever thought others pray better than you do, or hear God better, or just plain do life better? Yep, me too.

My friend could have done what many women do. Retreat. I'm not talking day spa here. I mean isolate herself. Thankfully my brave friend chose to press in and risk being vulnerable. That's hard to do when we've been hurt before. But what she found was that we all have our own insecurities and baggage, and the more honest we are with one another the more life-giving support we exchange.

I like to look at it this way: Prayer Sisters represent a place in “the body of Christ” as Jesus taught it. We need each other. We support each other. We push through our insecurities, risk transparency, and we grow—in our inner beings and in our relationships. And when we pray regularly with other desperate, imperfect, yet committed friends, we find tremendous comfort and strength. Camaraderie at its best.

**Surround yourself with godly, growing women.** Good advice, Rita.



**Begin to Pray...**

*Dear Lord,*

*We know that your love and mercy are fresh every morning (Lamentations 3:21-24). When you look at us, you don't see our faults. You see beautiful women whom you created. Remind us of who we are in you, and help us to see each other the way you see us. Thank you, Father, for revealing just how special you made us to be. As individuals and as a special group of friends who come to you together in prayer. It is because of you and your great love for us that we are here today. All glory and honor and praise be to you, great King of Kings, as we pray today...*

**Journal** (Record group requests and answers)

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**Personal challenge:**

I will not judge others or myself; instead I will ask God to transform my heart with his healing love.

**Group Check-up Question:**

Are we creating a safe place by keeping all prayer requests and concerns confidential?

**Sisterly Advice on Friendship:**

As you begin your new relationship together as Prayer Sisters, recognize that there are several levels and types of friendships. Some Prayer Sisters will become bosom buddies, sharing much of their lives with each other. Others may simply treasure the safe haven of prayer they enjoy together, and see each other only at regular prayer times. Many will develop comfortable, you-can-count-on-me friendships. This will take time. Be patient. And keep in mind that no friend can meet all of our needs. God alone can do that.



## Lesson 3

### What to Pray

It was a sight every mother hopes she doesn't have to see. We had received the call a few moments earlier, and I gasped for air as we topped the hill to see all of the flashing lights and the sickening sight of our son's car upside down in the ditch. My husband pulled in behind the ambulance and the emergency worker immediately assured us our two teenagers were not seriously hurt.

As we climbed into the back of the ambulance, we saw our son Adam, then age 16, slumped on the bench, shame and embarrassment on his face. Our daughter Kaelin, then 15, was having her arm bandaged as she sat in silence.

The first words out of Adam's mouth were, "What bothers me the most is that I could have killed my sister." He was right. His careless driving totaled the car and endangered their lives. My husband and I acknowledged his mistake, and at the same time offered comfort and gratefulness that they were okay. I silently thanked God for protecting our kids as the EMT's finished their examination.

Little did I know I was thanking him for more than I realized at the time.

A short while after returning home, I received a call from one of my Prayer Sisters. I was surprised she'd already heard about the accident. Upon discussing the details and timing, we quickly realized that her daughter and a friend (the son of one of our other Prayer Sisters), sped over that same hill only seconds after my son lost control of the car and careened into the ditch, crossing the oncoming lane in the process. They saw the car upside down in the ditch, with no one around, and assumed the car had been there for some time. Truth is, Adam and Kaelin were still in the car, in an upside-down position they held for less than 30 seconds—critical moments in which their friends drove over the hill just barely missing a head-on collision. We could have lost the lives of four of our teenagers that night.

My Prayer Sisters and I continually thank God for his faithfulness in protecting our children that evening.

Did we pray specifically that day for our kids to avoid a rollover and potentially fatal collision later in the day? No, of course not. But we do continually pray for his protection. We pray for his will to be perfected in our lives and the lives of our loved ones, in every single way. In every prayer, we listen for the Holy Spirit to show us what to pray. Then we trust the Lord for his answers to our prayers, not ever really knowing exactly how that will look.



I recognize that sometimes God chooses to allow pain—a child to be hurt, a lost job, a hardened heart; he doesn't always swoop in to rescue us from difficult and painful circumstances. I don't know why. But I do believe that my loved ones are better shielded from the enemy when we are praying for them, than they would be if we didn't pray for them at all. They are safer within God's care when we intercede on their behalf.

Today in your prayer time, give God all of your needs, trusting him to direct your prayers. Then trust him to take care of them in his way and in his time.

### **Scripture**

Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. (Isaiah 65:24)

### **Begin to Pray...**

*Dear Father,*

*Thank you for every single time you intervene in our lives and the lives of our loved ones as a direct answer to our prayers. Help us to see and recognize your involvement. Encourage us to press on, diligently interceding for your will to be fulfilled on this earth.*

*We confess that sometimes we are perplexed at your response to our prayers. It is hard to understand why you spare some the agony of illness, while others struggle through years of pain. Help us to trust in your sovereignty and the way you choose to work in our lives. Replace our fear and doubt with faith. Fill our minds and our hearts with the truth of your scriptures and the life that is ours because of Jesus.*

*Today as we pray, we surrender our own plans, desires and hopes to you, trusting that you know better than we do how to work out all the details. Please help us to know and hear the voice of the Holy Spirit leading us. Show us what to pray...*

**Journal** (Record group requests and answers)

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**Personal challenge:** When I start to think God might not be answering my prayers, I will look more closely for his hand at work.

**Group Question:** Are we praying with an “agenda” expecting God to answer just the way we want, or are we praying openly, trusting him to work in every situation his way?

### **Sisterly Advice**

#### **...on Prayer**

Let the Holy Spirit direct your prayers and you will be amazed at the peace that follows.



## Lesson 4

### Intentional Investment

As her toddler climbed in her lap and wiped at his mommy's tears, Erika fought the temptation to jump in her car and drive back home to Kentucky. She knew that was impossible. She couldn't leave her husband, their new home, their new life in Colorado. Lonely and discouraged, she considered again the invitation she'd received to attend a Prayer Sisters meeting that night.

When finally her desperation for prayer and heart-level friends propelled her to her first Prayer Sisters get-together, to her delight she found several young women her own age, as well as older moms to serve as mentors. She took the first step to becoming a Prayer Sister and agreed to co-start a group.

It was only the beginning.

Erika's group soon experienced typical challenges many Prayer Sisters face—one gal moved away, a couple of personalities didn't mix well, and they all found it difficult to settle on a consistent meeting time. Erika and her friends quickly learned an important lesson about being a Prayer Sister—it requires *investment*.

It takes work and commitment to be a productive Prayer Sister. This wonderful community of prayer support won't surround us by itself. Erika will tell you, investing in a bunch of people she didn't know was difficult at first, but as they continue to open up, meet consistently, go for walks and meet for lunch occasionally, God is shaping and growing them all deeper through their differing personalities.

There's an important principle at play here, and it applies to our Prayer Sisters commitment just as it applies to prayer. Consider these wise words from prayer expert Dr. Dick Eastman:

**“Something happens when we pray that doesn't happen when we don't.”**

Think about it! Something *does* happen when we pray... Prayers are answered—prayers that wouldn't be answered if we didn't pray them! Just like Prayer Sisters won't happen if we don't commit to be faithful to our group.

But watch what happens when we are intentional about investing our time, energy, and hearts in Prayer Sisters. We help each other stick to our commitment to pray and to mature in our personal spiritual growth. And we experience something more—deeper, victorious, abundant—than we would if we continue walking through life alone.



Girls, we can count on incredible things happening that wouldn't happen if we weren't Prayer Sisters. Press on!

**Scripture**

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. (Colossians 3:23-24)

**Begin to Pray...**

*Dear Lord Jesus,*

*We thank you for the great things you are doing. Thank you for the beautiful work you have begun in our lives (Philippians 1:6). We invite you to keep on working, in us and in the lives of our loved ones. Help us to be diligent in our commitment to pray together, and tenacious in our prayers. We trust your promises to meet our needs and teach us your ways. Strengthen us as we pray for each other and our loved ones today...*

**Journal** (Record group requests and answers)

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**Personal challenge:**

I will share with my Prayer Sisters the spiritual lessons I am learning.

**Group Check-up Question:**

Are we being diligent in meeting regularly?

**Sisterly Advice on Friendship:**

When we share our own spiritual journey—insights, victories, obstacles, our hearts—with our Prayer Sisters, we start to experience a life that is deeper and more vibrant.



## Lesson 5

### More Prayer, Less Talk

The day we talked the entire two hours of our prayer time, we knew something needed to change.

That particular morning, my Prayer Sisters gathered in a beautiful prayer room at a local church, where one of our Prayer Sisters serves on staff. It was the perfect setting for diligent prayer. Each of us nestled into a comfy winged-back chair, the door closed to the bustling activities of the church office down the hall. The quiet room offered solitude and no interruptions. We began to share prayer requests, taking turns and asking questions.

Before we knew it, our friend stood and almost tearfully said, "I'm sorry, but I need to get back to work." She quickly left the room and the rest of us sighed with regret as we realized what we'd done. Because we care about one another, we had allowed ourselves to "catch up" and gather "all the details" before we started praying. And in the process, we had gobbled up all of our prayer time with chatter.

With repentant hearts we bowed our heads and asked God to forgive us for not making prayer a priority, and to help us be fastidious about consistently getting to the heart of why we meet in the first place—prayer.

We have since discovered some effective ways of avoiding the trap of "too much talk" and "no time left for prayer." We now email our prayer requests to one another a day or two before our scheduled prayer times. This allows us to first read our friends' concerns in the privacy of our own homes, permitting us to quickly join in prayer when we get together since the time-consuming process of sharing prayer requests has been eliminated. We visit as we fix a cup of tea or coffee, inquiring about the most urgent prayer needs, and then we settle into a time of fervent prayer, copies of our emailed requests in hand.

When we are all committed to making sure we get quickly to our prayer time, it only takes one Prayer Sister to gently remind the rest, "Hey, we'd better start praying! We can talk later." In fact, sometimes we begin praying right away and save visiting for after prayer.

One of our favorite ways to remedy our need for "catching up" is to schedule lunches out together. We celebrate one another's birthdays regularly and occasionally we will plan an evening together just for the fun of it. In these casual settings, we visit freely and talk like mad to get all of our socializing in!



To be honest with you, this remains one of our biggest challenges. We love one another and we love to talk! But then we remind ourselves that our prayers won't get answered if we don't get around to praying them. It motivates us to get to work...and pray.

**Scripture**

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:18)

**Begin to Pray...**

*Dear Lord,*

*Thank you for these friendships. We are truly grateful that you have led us to one another and called us to battle together in prayer. Please forgive us when we get busy or become distracted and let prayer fall in our priorities. Help us to be diligent and committed in our prayer times.*

*We know that the enemy does not want us to succeed in praying together. Help us to be alert and remain faithful in prayer. Please help us to recognize when we are getting carried away with too much talk and gently convict our hearts as only you can do and turn them towards you.*

*Inspire our hearts and instruct our minds as we pray today. Thank you for the blessing of joining with these friends as we come to you with our requests. We trust you to lead us solidly into prayer, and we trust you for the answers...*

**Journal** (Record group requests and answers)

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**Personal challenge:** I choose to make prayer my main reason for getting together with my Prayer Sisters.

**Group Question:** How are we managing our visiting and prayer times? If we are taking up too much time talking, what can we change to make sure we start praying sooner?

**Sisterly Advice**

**...on Friendship**

As friends who care about one another, we must be diligent, and not distracted, to battle in prayer for each other.



## Lesson 6

### Please Pray for Me

I hesitated whether to even go to my Prayer Sisters meeting that day. My faith had vanished. In fact, it appeared to be dying, right along with my best friend who lay in a coma in a nearby hospital.

After giving birth to her fifth child, my friend Lindsey suffered severe complications that threatened her life. Although countless people were praying for her healing, death still appeared eminent. Oh, how I questioned God.

“How could you let this happen?” ... “Why haven’t you chosen to miraculously (that means *quickly* in my terms) heal her?” ... And the most difficult question of all... “If you don’t heal her, then what’s the difference between our lives and those who don’t know you? I mean, *why bother praying?*” I must confess—these words didn’t come sweetly out of my mouth. I yelled them in anger, frustration and doubt.

So, as I drove to meet with my Prayer Sisters for our regular prayer time, I felt utterly worthless as a prayer warrior. I debated how much I should share with my praying buddies regarding my inner struggle, the tug-of-war between faith and despair. My love for Lindsey finally won out, and I decided to join my friends for prayer, if only to ask them to pray for her.

I walked in the door and immediately my friends began to ask about Lindsey.

“How terrible! And how incredibly sad,” they agreed.

Then, as we began to share our other prayer requests, one of my sensitive Prayer Sisters gently probed, “So...how are *you*, Kathy?”

Unable to contain the grief and confusion, I spilled. Kind of like vomiting on a friend’s new carpet. I was angry, ugly, and far from the encouraging comrade I’d like to be. At first I was unsure how my honesty would be received, but within moments, my faithful friends gathered around me and began to pray. Not only for Lindsey’s healing, but for *my* healing—the recovery and restoration of my faith and comfort of my soul.

Amazingly, and over the course of several months, God answered those prayers in the way we all wanted. Lindsey did not die, and my faith did not die, either, and continues to strengthen as I pray honestly with my friends.

I admit, I am extremely grateful to my friends for battling in prayer for me just as diligently as they did for Lindsey, even though she was my primary prayer request. It is easier to ask for



prayer for others, isn't it? Or to request prayer for external needs in our lives, like jobs, finances, and health. But what beautiful, heart-transforming miracles can occur when we reveal our aching, doubting, struggling thoughts to trusting friends and watch God's love at work.

Today, pray openly. Pray honestly. And watch what happens...

### Scripture

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man [woman] is powerful and effective. (James 5:16) [emphasis added]

### Begin to Pray...

*Precious Lord,*

*Thank you for promising to forgive our sins. Thank you that when we confess our sins to one another, you heal our burdened hearts. We rejoice in your promises and are comforted.*

*Help us to open our hearts to you in prayer and with one another. You tell us in scripture that when we confess our sins and pray for one another, we are healed. Not only that, but our prayers are "powerful and effective." That's what we long for. We don't want to keep secrets hidden that hinder our prayers.*

*Fill our hearts with your grace and forgiveness as we develop friendships with nonjudgmental trust. And empower our prayers as we lift our requests to you...*

**Journal** (Record group requests and answers)

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**Personal challenge:** I will personally pray for the courage to confess my sins to my Prayer Sisters.

**Group Question:** Are we creating a safe place to share difficult prayer needs?

### Sisterly Advice

#### ...on Prayer Support

Every time a Prayer Sister admits a struggle, she takes a risk of being hurt by the judgment of others. Protect one another by listening quietly and committing to pray rather than counsel, in complete confidentiality and covered with God's grace.



## Lesson 7

### Fight for Time

Today I received news that reminded me why we do what we do. Why we sacrifice the time to get together to battle in prayer. Why we leave our kitchens dirty and laundry undone. Why we say no to other demands and opportunities, and make prayer our priority. Today a prodigal child returned home.

When my friend's daughter walked away from God it nearly broke her mother's heart. A wrestling match began, a young woman the prize. Satan on one side, my friend and her interceding friends on the other. No contest, really, considering the mighty power of God fueled our prayers. But was the fight easy or swift? Of course not. It was grueling, heart breaking, gut wrenching, exhausting... and it took time.

I realize we don't all have wayward kids or some other catastrophe in our lives. Well, at least not right now. But, truth is, it is important to pray about all the details in our lives, big and small, traumatic and trivial. Because God loves to hear and answer the prayers of his people, and the enemy has a plan to prevent that from happening. It's called busyness. Time. Not enough of it, we say. Too busy. I know. I really do get it.

Some days I compare my calendar to my to-do list and cry. How in the world can I get it all done? And heaven forbid anything else should try to crawl onto my already overloaded plate. I'll be honest with you. There are times when I absolutely can't make it to Prayer Sisters. On those days when I need to tend to the matters at hand, I trust in the grace of God and my forgiving Prayer Sisters for missing this week's prayer time.

Because we are all busy, aren't we? Always something to do, whether tedious or urgent. Sometimes we have to rearrange our scheduled prayer times because of everyone's overcrowded calendars, or pray with only one or two friends when the others are swamped with life's demands. That's okay. We just keep pressing on the best we can, because prayer is too important to abandon. We all fight the temptation to quit praying together; we fight the nagging lie that life might be easier if we didn't take the time to do this thing.

Because... more than "just another thing," praying together increases the power and effectiveness of our prayers. After praying with my dear friends, I have more strength, energy, confidence, hope, and peace than I've had all week. And more importantly, our prayers are at work, activating God's will and purpose in our lives and the lives of those we pray for so passionately. Wrestling matches are won and lives are changed.

Girls, we need to fight for the time to pray. So we can fight in prayer.



**Scripture**

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16, KJV).

**Begin to Pray...**

*Dear Jesus,*

*As we juggle our busy calendars, we ask you to give us the courage to seek you continually, trust you completely, rely on you fully, and to make the sacrifice of time to pray regularly. We long for closeness with you, for in that closeness we find peace, and the strength to pray with power and persistence. Take us to that deep place in you, for your honor and glory. We bend our will to yours, trusting in the truth that you know what is best for us, and you will defeat the enemy as we pray...*

**Journal** (Record group requests and answers)

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**Personal challenge:**

I will protect my Prayer Sisters time on my calendar and not allow less important activities to take its place.

**Group Check-up Question:**

How can we best schedule our prayer time so it fits everyone’s busy, changing schedules?

**Sisterly Advice on Spiritual Growth:**

When life seems to overwhelm you, “set your heart on things above” (Colossians 3:1). Include praise in your regular prayer times. It’s amazing how peace can replace anxiety when we remind ourselves how awesome God is!



## Lesson 8

### Positive Place

All of us were acting weird that day, and I'm not sure why. But as our Prayer Sisters met for our regular prayer time, we quickly realized that we all shared a common prayer request. Every single one of us wanted to kill our husbands.

Well, not quite. But each of us was experiencing some irritation or frustration with the loves of our lives. I had included my marriage in my email prayer requests that week and had desperately pleaded for empathy. I wrote, "Anybody identify with my struggle? Please tell me I'm not alone in ever experiencing this!!"

I was surprised, and somehow comforted, as one by one, my Prayer Sisters began to share their own complaints. We bemoaned the fate of being married to a snorer, an "I'll get to the sprinkling system later" sports-watcher, a "By the way, honey, I'll be gone for twelve days on my next business trip" entrepreneur. We high fived and cheered one another on in our emotional tirade.

Then, in one sweet gentle moment, everything changed. One of our Prayer Sisters said, "You know, it's wonderful that we have this safe place to unload our aggravations, and to know that we all struggle with the same things really helps. But this is also a place to encourage one another so we don't stay here." Instantly, we all recognized where we were headed—the dangerous "ugly attitude" trap—and we immediately turned our conversation around.

Together we surrendered our annoyances and hostilities to the Lord. Then we took turns praying for one another. By revealing our honest feelings, we acknowledged the negative and sometimes difficult situations in our lives, receiving empathy from our understanding friends. But more importantly, we reminded ourselves that we really do want the healthy relationships that God wants, even when feeling sorry for ourselves might feel better at the time. As we prayed, we replaced our self-pity with hopeful expectancy, and in the process prevented our hearts from hardening into disastrous criticism and pessimism.

As you pray today, don't be afraid to share your honest thoughts and feelings. Chances are your friends can relate. We all struggle at times...with in-laws, kids, a demanding boss, even our own inner battles. As our trust in one another grows, our Prayer Sisters will become a safe haven for "unloading." But make sure your conversations don't spiral and tumble down a critical slope. Each one of us holds the power to transform negative comments into hopeful prayers. And *hope* is something we can *all* relate to. It's why we pray.



## Scripture

But encourage one another daily... so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. (Hebrews 3:13)

## Begin to pray...

*Jesus,*

*Please forgive us when we get carried away—with our emotions, self-defense, criticism and anger—anything that takes our focus and trust away from you. Thank you for understanding the conflicts in our relationships as deeply as you know the unrest in our hearts. Thank you, also, that your plan is for those conflicts to be resolved and our hearts to be at peace.*

*Help us to seek you wholeheartedly. Fill us with faith. We long to trust that you will answer our prayers and take care of every situation that we surrender to you. Replace our negative, doubting thoughts with positive, hopeful expectation as we pray...*

## Journal (Record group requests and answers)

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**Personal challenge:** When I begin to grumble, pout and criticize, I will stop what I am doing... and pray.

**Group Question:** Are we being careful to avoid “husband-bashing” and other critical talk?

## Sisterly Advice

### ...on Spiritual Growth

Point one another to the hope we have in Jesus, and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit through our prayers, rather than getting stuck in our negative thoughts.



## Lesson 9

### Give and Receive

As women, we wear many hats. Daughter, sister, friend, neighbor, leader. Some of us are wives, moms. And you know what we do? Work, work, work. Give, give, give. That's what we do. It's in our nature.

There is a Prayer Sister who is one of the givingest people I know. She babysits her grandbaby while her daughter works, comforts her daughter-in-law while her military son is overseas, tends to her aging mother and ailing uncle, hosts a haven for her grown foster daughter, and provides jobs in her home for the unemployed. Give, give, give. That's what she does.

So where does she go to receive? Prayer Sisters. But of course you know what happens. She gives to her Prayer Sisters, too. She prays and cares and cries right along with the rest of them. And in the process, she is nurtured. They all are.

Girls, when we pray together, wonderful things happen. Our faith is bolstered as we listen to good friends pray passionately for our concerns. Our hope is refreshed as we share answers to heartfelt prayers. Our strength is renewed as we remind one another that our prayers reach a loving God who cares about our needs as much as we do.

A team of workers can accomplish more than one weary, overworked, overwhelmed individual. When we pray together, it's as though each Prayer Sister raises a support beam to help lift the weight of our vast boatload of concerns. And you know what? When we help each other pray, the load becomes lighter for all of us. And when we walk through life together as praying, caring, committed friends we are nurtured in the truest sense of the word. Body, soul, spirit.

A few years ago, I had emergency surgery to remove a rapidly growing mysterious tumor in my ovary. My scared, yet faithful Prayer Sisters waited and prayed at the hospital with my family. They cheered with relief when they learned the tumor was benign. I returned home with help—meals, visits and lots of prayer. One day as I lay on my sofa recovering, I chuckled as one of my Prayer Sisters rushed to my door with Diet Pepsi and toilet paper.

"Well!" my friend said, "Don't think your needs won't be met. Not when you have Prayer Sisters!"

Her words reached deep into my heart, because she was right. My needs for friendship and prayer support *are* being met. And now that you are a Prayer Sister, I pray yours are, too!



This kind of nurturing support helps us to keep going. So we can keep on working and giving and wearing our hats.

**Scripture**

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

**Begin to Pray...**

*Father God,*

*Teach us to care for the needy, for the lost, for each other. May the love and grace you have so freely given us extend to those in need around us. Show us now to balance all the demands in our lives. Teach us to care appropriately for our own family and our Prayer Sisters. And help us to take care of ourselves as well, so we don't burn out or grow weary. Renew us today with your peace and joy, and fill our hearts with your Spirit as we pray...*

**Journal** (Record group requests and answers)

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**Personal challenge:**

I open my heart to both give and receive at Prayer Sisters today.

**Group Check-up Question:**

How are we making sure all of our prayer requests are being covered?

**Sisterly Advice on Prayer:**

Tremendous emotional healing occurs when we pray for others. When we are weary, hurt, afraid, discouraged, or angry—praying for others becomes a catalyst to our own recovery.



## Lesson 10

### Battle Buddies

I remember the day I couldn't pray. That was the day I learned something powerful about having Prayer Sisters.

My Prayer Sisters gathered in our normal setting for prayer. Comfortably seated in my friend's fluffy recliner, I began. Or I tried. But my mouth and my brain froze—with fear, doubt, despair—I'm not sure. I only know that a cloud formed over my brain and nothing would come out of my mouth.

Sensing the spiritual struggle going on, one of my Prayer Sisters quickly knelt beside me. Taking my hand in hers she refused to let our enemy silence me, and with the support of the rest of our Prayer Sisters praying alongside, she continued the prayer I had started.

I don't know about you, but I don't like thinking about life as a battle zone. I prefer flowers and sunny days in a breezy hammock. But the truth is, we *do* have an enemy with a mission to keep us silent and separate from God. In other words—he wants to prevent us from praying.

Why? Because Satan knows that when we call on the powers of heaven, we win. That's why he puts up such a fight. And fight he does. He tries to discourage us so we'll give up, distract us with busyness so we don't pray, deceive us so we almost forget he's around. He doesn't let up and neither should we. If we want to see God's will in our lives and in the lives of our loved ones, we have no choice but to persist in prayer. Wrestle in prayer, in fact.

One day while reading the scriptures, I found a new hero. In a letter to a group of his friends, Paul includes greetings from Epaphras and says, "He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured" (Colossians 4:12). Wow. Imagine the battles that occurred as this faithful friend bowed his head and fought for the spiritual welfare of his comrades. And you know what? That's exactly what Prayer Sisters are—we are prayer wrestlers!

There is power in praying together. I have experienced it firsthand. Like an army, Prayer Sisters support one another to withstand and overcome the enemy's attacks. I prefer to enter the battle with fellow prayer warriors surrounding me rather than on my own. And we do that every time we gather to pray. With Prayer Sisters, we are not alone in the battle.

Let's pray, girls. Together we are powerful.



**Scripture**

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.  
(2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

**Begin to Pray...**

*Dear Lord,*

*We thank you for your powerful, guiding hand in our lives. Help us to stand firmly in faith and in the confidence of your promises as we battle the evil in this world. Thank you that our victory doesn't depend on our strength, but that you are the source of our strength. Shine your light of truth into our hearts and through us to expose the lies of the enemy. You don't want us to be silent but rather you love to hear our prayers. Teach us how to pray effectively and powerfully; direct our prayers today...*

**Journal** (Record group requests and answers)

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**Personal challenge:**

I commit to be a prayer wrestler for my sisters.

**Group Check-up Question:**

How can we stand firm against the enemy's strategies, especially his attempts to keep us from praying together?

**Sisterly Advice on Spiritual Growth:**

The Bible tells us to be aware of the enemy, to resist him and to stand firm against his attacks. God makes us stronger in the process. (See I Peter 5:8-11)

## Lesson 11

### Wishes, Prayers and Truth

People believe a lot of weird stuff these days. Especially about prayer.

Many well-intentioned souls whisper what they think are prayers into the wind, not really sure what they believe. But hopeful prayers become mere wishes if they are not based upon God's truth. There is a *big* difference between, "Oh, how I wish ..." or "I'm sending good thoughts..." and... "In the truth and name of Jesus, I pray."

One day during our regular prayer time, I noticed that one of our Prayer Sisters was discouraged, yet hopeful—all at the same time. Her determination intrigued me. As our prayer time continued, she reached into the outer flap of her Bible and pulled out several worn index cards. She then started reading aloud her handwritten words, which we soon recognized as scriptures. With one small, significant switch.

In every place appropriate, she substituted the names of her loved ones who needed the truth of that particular scripture. She prayed, "Lord, you have said in your word, 'I will be with \_\_\_\_ in trouble, I will deliver \_\_\_\_\_ and honor \_\_\_\_\_.' (from Psalm 91:15) I trust you to do this for my son who is in trouble today."

Each one of us felt the intensity of faith fill the room as we agreed in prayer while our friend read several more scriptures. As we prayed with biblical principles packed into our words, our hope was renewed by God's promises.

What we witnessed that day represented a profound truth. God's word is *the* truth that we can trust ... and it changes lives! Wishes can't do that. Jesus told the Jews who believed in him that if they held onto his teachings they would be free. To know his teachings we must read and study the Bible. Then we embrace God's word as we live ... and as we pray. When Prayer Sisters hold onto God's promises, we find ourselves being set free from fear, confusion, anger and utter hopelessness. The more we read the Bible and apply its truths to our lives and to our prayers, the more empowered we are as we pray.

We can trust God's truth as we persevere in prayer, even when the answers seem long in coming. Some of us have been praying for *years* for loved ones. We take comfort that our prayers are not doomed to failure, whispered like a wish in the midst of false beliefs, but rather they are spoken directly to Jesus who said, "I am the way and the *truth* and the life" (John 14:6) (emphasis mine). As Prayer Sisters, we commit to ask Jesus to fill our hearts and minds with his truth and life, and to have his way in our lives. We make it a priority to read and study the Bible on our own, and to spend personal time in prayer. And when we do, we grow in necessary strength to keep on praying, no matter how long it takes for our prayers to be answered.



My dear Prayer Sisters ... we have the opportunity to support one another with the real hope that comes with knowing God's truth and praying it together. And when our prayers become more than wishes, when they are filled with the truth of God, amazing things happen. You'll see!

**Scripture:**

If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. (John 8:32)

**Begin to pray...**

*Dear Lord Jesus,*

*You have given us so many beautiful promises through your word, the Holy Bible. Help us to learn all we can about you and let that truth sink deep into our hearts and minds. Please help us to recognize the lies and false beliefs that can so cunningly deceive us and weaken our prayers. We long to spend sweet time with you in prayer. And we know that to do that, we can't let anything come between us and you. Forgive us for all the wrong things we have believed. Let your truth shine like an unwavering beacon amidst all of our thoughts and draw us to you. Give us an insatiable desire to read and study the Bible and help us to declare its truths during our prayer time. We accept the fact that the word of God is absolute truth and we trust you to lead us as we pray...*

**Journal** (Record group requests and answers)

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**Personal challenge:** I commit to reading and studying the Bible so that my prayers can be *Power* packed!

**Group Question:** What are we doing to make sure our prayers are empowered with God's truth and not simply wishes?

**Sisterly Advice**

**...on Spiritual Growth**

As you read the Bible, expect God's truth to challenge, inspire and encourage you. But most of all... let it transform you.



## Lesson 12

### The Ultimate Why of Prayer Sisters

One morning my Prayer Sisters and I prayed ferociously for a wounded kid whose life was in danger. Only we didn't know it was.

You see, that mama wasn't able to join us that day. Later in the week I shared with our friend what we'd prayed—that we'd sensed spiritual danger in her loved one's life and stood against it in the name of Jesus. Instantly her tears welled up and she whispered, "But I didn't reveal that to anybody!"

No, she didn't... But the Holy Spirit did. He told the Prayer Sisters so we could intercede for one of our own. *Remarkable.*

This story represents two of the things I love most about Prayer Sisters. First, it represents the constant, stable, relentless force of a group of committed praying friends.

And second, this experience shows how prayer is REAL, because we have a faithful, loving, interactive God.

And that, truly, is what Prayer Sisters is all about. Knowing God...and interacting with him through prayer and through his people. *Incredible.*

My Prayer Sisters and I have been praying together for several years. We've walked and prayed through the ebbs and flows of life, spiritual highs and lows, good times and poor, answered prayers and agonizing silence.

And I have to tell you, over the years we've prayed some, well, almost whiny prayers. At times confused, discouraged, or perhaps even disgruntled, angry at God's apparent indifference, we whimper our honest cries to the Lord together. And then a beautiful thing always happens. We remind one another of God's character, and we gain strength. Our cries shift to praise, and our hope is revived as God's powerful presence renews our minds and refreshes our souls.

We may not always have the answers to life's puzzling questions, and we may not often understand what God is doing. But we do know we can trust in the truth of who he is....

God is faithful—He promises to never leave us or reject us, and to always be there when we call.  
God is loving—He loves us unconditionally, passionately, sacrificially.  
God is interactive.—He listens, he speaks, he directs, he intervenes.

*Wonderful.*



As we steadfastly meet and pray with our Prayer Sisters, let us always remember the reason we pray...to place ourselves and our loved ones in the forever faithful, loving, active hands of God, and to praise his name together.

Girls, Prayer Sisters, treasured friends... let us praise him, worship him, cry out to him, trust him. Week after week, month after month, year after year. *Beautiful.*

**Scripture:**

Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made. (Psalm 145:3, 17)

**Begin to Pray...**

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. (Matthew 6:9-13)*

*For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. We give our hearts and our praise to you today, and every day, as we pray...*

**Journal** (Record group requests and answers)

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**Personal challenge:**

I will learn all I can about God's character so I can fully place my trust in him.

**Group Check-up Question:**

Are we including praise and worship during our prayer times?

**Sisterly Advice on Friendship**

The best gift of friendship we can ever give is to help draw our friends closer to God.



## Prayer Relationship

Incredible, isn't it? Imagine...the mighty One who created all things carrying on a personal conversation with us. But that's precisely what prayer is—we talk to God and we listen to what he has to say to us in return.

He is always available, always listening, always ready to embrace us with his love. And in his love, he desires for us to experience an uninhibited personal relationship with him. And that, my friend, is the most amazing thing of all!

God offers us the gift of a fulfilled life, full of purpose and love, with an eternal destiny.

But he doesn't demand we take it. In fact, he really can't give it to us until we ask. That is because we each have built a barrier between ourselves and God. We have all made bad choices that make us unworthy of such a relationship. No matter how hard we try, we can never be pure and holy enough to be God's intimate friend.

The thing is, when God created us, he designed us with a deep desire to have fellowship with him. That longing within us can never be satisfied on our own. But God, in his great love for us, has provided another way.

At a critical time in human history, God sent his Son Jesus to address the sin that separates us from God. Jesus willingly suffered the responsibility and penalty for the sins of all mankind, including yours and mine. In doing so, Jesus bridged the chasm between us and God. When Jesus returned to heaven, he sent his Spirit to earth to be with us. To live in us, teaching and leading us in the life God designed for us.

If you would like a personal relationship with God, tell Him so in prayer. Your words don't have to be fancy and they don't have to follow anyone's rules. Simply tell him what is on your heart. If you'd like some direction, you can begin with the following prayer, and then finish with whatever you want to say. He is waiting with open arms.

“I want to be close to you, God, but my sin keeps me distant from you. Thank you, Jesus, for accepting the responsibility and paying the penalty for my sin—past, present and future. I trust you, God, to forgive me and bless me with the full life you promise in your word (John 10:10). Please empower me with your Holy Spirit so I may live in surrendered relationship with you. And help me to live my life every day aware of your love for me. Show me the way....”



## More Prayer Sisters Tips

Now that you've finished these twelve lessons, be intentional about practicing them as you walk through life together. The following ideas will also help you grow as you continue down your path as Prayer Sisters.

### **Commit to meet consistently and often.**

In our busy lives, many activities crowd in for the same space on the calendar. It is important to make your meeting times a priority. You won't regret setting aside and committing the time to pray. The benefits are worth it!

### **Be active in the Prayer Sisters International (PSI) Community**

- Join the worldwide community of Prayer Sisters on our PSI Facebook page (Facebook/Prayer Sisters International)
- Post your Prayer Sisters stories, pics, and comments on Facebook
- Invite other women to join Prayer Sisters and show them how to download their own free resources

### **Utilize Prayer Sisters resources**

Continue learning from our PSI leadership team and other Prayer Sisters by reading the blogs and stories ([www.prayersisters.org](http://www.prayersisters.org)) and connecting via Facebook/Prayer Sisters International.

### **Work together**

Consider doing a service project with your Prayer Sisters. Volunteer to pray together for special events in your community or serve in a women's crisis shelter or other charitable organization. Working together helps build your relationship and it helps you grow individually.

### **Start a prayer journal**

If you've never journaled before, this is a great time to start! Your prayer journal can be a great tool to help you pray. This is a personal exercise and each woman's prayer journal will be different. Many Prayer Sisters find it helpful to keep a notebook to record prayer requests and answers. Others prefer to literally write their prayers during their personal prayer time. (Write your prayers just like you would say them. "Dear God, I pray for...")

### **Note favorite scriptures**

As you read your Bible, you will find verses that are especially meaningful to you. You may choose to highlight or underline special verses in your Bible with colored pencils or special highlighters so you can find them again easily. In addition, we encourage you to write your favorite scriptures in your prayer journal. Then, when you pray together, refer to these important truths to inspire and encourage you.



## Free Downloads

To download your free resources, visit our website at [www.prayersisters.org](http://www.prayersisters.org) or contact us at [contact@prayersisters.org](mailto:contact@prayersisters.org).

- ***Quick Start***

This concise booklet shares the vision of Prayer Sisters and gives basic information on how to start and manage your own Prayer Sisters group. Download as many times as you need, and share these valuable resources with your friends. A basic resource for every Prayer Sister.

- ***Prayer Sisters Group Guide***

This helpful book is a fun read and effective teaching tool that provides guidance for each Prayer Sister group. Included in this book is a section of important lessons that groups can read at the beginning of their first few sessions together. The ***Group Guide*** addresses issues like expectations, attitudes, God's promises, ideas to help you grow spiritually, and more. Picture it as experienced Prayer Sisters joining you, sharing life stories and offering valuable sisterly advice. Every Prayer Sister will want to download her own free copy!

## Website

[www.prayersisters.org](http://www.prayersisters.org)

Through our website, you can download all the resources you will need to support your own Prayer Sisters group. You'll also find stories, advice, and ideas from other Prayer Sisters to help you on your Prayer Sisters journey.

## Facebook/ Prayer Sisters International

Join our growing network of Prayer Sisters worldwide! At Facebook/Prayer Sisters International.

Prayer Sisters International is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.  
All contributions are tax deductible,  
and go directly to help women around the world become Prayer Sisters.

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