

### CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time together with prayer.

Dear God, you have written with wisdom the story of our lives. You have made us in your image and likeness. You have called us to love you and to love one another. You have given us the gift of life and the promise of eternal life. We thank you for all that you have done for us. We pray for the peace and unity of the world. We pray for the healing of the sick and the redemption of the souls of all men. We pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth. Amen.

with the Lord

...the Lord our God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of the Son, the Father of the Spirit, the Father of the Church, the Father of the Kingdom of God on earth, the Father of the Kingdom of Heaven. We pray for the peace and unity of the world. We pray for the healing of the sick and the redemption of the souls of all men. We pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth. Amen.

### SESSION 1

## Lenten Practice

Let's take a good look at the way we're living and reorder our lives under God.

*Lamentations 3:40 MSG*

### THE STARTING POINT FOR JOY

The starting point for Lent requires holding two things in tension—a humble reckoning of our sinful condition and a brave expectation that we will be changed. It is a spring-cleaning of the soul that gives us permission to take seriously the areas of our lives in which we fall short, feel defeated, or have grown cold. And it is a kindling of the soul that sparks our desire to return to God with our whole heart. The author of Hebrews captures this demanding yet joyful spirit of Lent with these words: