

Are We
THERE *Yet?*

B R I A N W A S H I N G T O N

**LEADER /
SMALL GROUP
GUIDE**

FACILITATE.
DISCIPLE
JOURNEY
TOGETHER.



Leader / Small Group Guide



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Thank You for Leading.

This guide is designed to help you lead a group through Are We There Yet? in a way that is thoughtful, practical, spiritually meaningful, and emotionally responsible. Whether you are leading a church group, a circle of friends, a ministry team, or a home group, this guide gives you structure without requiring you to become the expert in the room.

The aim is not to rush people toward tidy answers. It is to create enough safety and direction for honest conversation, biblical reflection, practical application, and appropriate care.



“The road is not wasted space. Formation happens while we are still moving.”

A note on disclosure: participants should never be pressured to share private trauma, abuse, mental-health concerns, or unsafe situations. Encourage honesty without demanding exposure. When a conversation moves beyond the group's role or competence, appropriate pastoral, medical, therapeutic, crisis, or safety support may be the wise next step.

How to Use This Guide

Think of each meeting in three movements: prepare the room, guide the conversation, and help people carry one faithful next step into the week.

BEFORE THE SESSION	DURING THE SESSION	AFTER THE SESSION
1 READ Read the assigned chapters. Mark one idea or tension to revisit.	3 FACILITATE Ask open questions, allow silence, and resist solving every situation.	5 CLOSE WITH CARE End with prayer or reflection without emotional pressure.
2 PREPARE Choose the questions, Scripture anchors, and practice that best fit your group.	4 APPLY Help the group name one realistic response rather than ending with inspiration alone.	→ FOLLOW UP Reach out privately when someone signals a need for additional care or support.



A SIMPLE 60–75 MINUTE FLOW

5–10 MIN	10 MIN	30–35 MIN	10 MIN	5 MIN
WELCOME Check in and reconnect.	REVISIT Return to one key idea or passage.	DISCUSS Use selected questions; do not rush.	PRACTICE Name a concrete next step.	CLOSE Prayer or quiet reflection.

Leader note: The timing is a guide, not a rule. If one honest conversation needs more room, let depth matter more than finishing every question.

Group Culture, Care & Leader Preparation

Be Safe

What is shared in the group should be treated with care and confidentiality, except when an immediate safety concern requires outside help.

Be Respectful

Listen without interrupting. Avoid correcting someone's lived experience. Disagreement can be honest without becoming dismissive.

Be Real

Participants may pass on any question. Honest uncertainty is welcome; performance is not required.

Be Scripture-Grounded

Use Scripture as a guide for reflection and formation, not as a shortcut around grief, complexity, or wise practical care.

Be Boundaried

Returning, forgiving, or reconciling never requires re-entering unsafe situations. Healthy boundaries can be a faithful response.

LEADER PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- Read the assigned chapters before the meeting.
- Choose 4–6 discussion questions rather than attempting every prompt.
- Identify one question that may need extra care or context.
- Prepare a welcoming environment for in-person or virtual participants.
- Know what local pastoral, counseling, medical, crisis, or safety resources you can refer to if needed.

The Journey at a Glance

#	SESSION	READING	FOCUS
1	Redefining "There"	Introduction — The Endless Quest for There; Chapter 1 — Embracing the Winding Roads	Recognize how our definition of arrival shapes the way we experience waiting, detours, and progress.
2	Progress and Discernment	Chapter 2 — Embracing the Dance of Progression; Chapter 3 — Unveiling the Path to There	Learn to recognize progress without demanding perfect certainty before taking the next faithful step.
3	Home, Identity, and the Inner Journey	Chapter 4 — The Path of Travelers; Chapter 5 — Embracing the Journey Within	Explore belonging, identity, grace, and the inner work that often accompanies the journey home.
4	Repositioning and Returning	Chapter 6 — Repositioning on the Journey; Chapter 7 — Embracing the Journey of Return	Name drift honestly and consider what healthy repositioning, repentance, rest, or return may require.
5	Beginning Again and Noticing God	Chapter 8 — Let the Journey Begin; Chapter 9 — Walking in Divine Footprints	Practice beginning again without shame and noticing God's presence in ordinary places.
6	Forgiveness and Gratitude	Chapter 10 — The Pathway of Forgiveness; Chapter 11 — The Pathway of Gratitude	Hold forgiveness and gratitude with honesty without minimizing harm, grief, boundaries, or unresolved pain.
7	Wisdom and Divine Dialogue	Chapter 12 — Gathering Pebbles of Wisdom; Chapter 13 — Divine Dialogue	Gather what the road has taught you and practice honest, grounded prayer and discernment.
8	Crossroads, Reflection, and the Never-Ending Journey	Chapter 14 — At the Divine Crossroads; Chapter 15 — Reflections in Life's Mirror; Chapter 16 — The Never-Ending Journey	Reflect on what has changed, what remains unresolved, and how to continue the journey with open hands.



Use the eight-session path as a recommended structure, not a rigid rule. Groups may combine or extend sessions depending on pace, group size, and the depth of conversation.

Redefining “There”



READ BEFORE MEETING	Introduction — The Endless Quest for There; Chapter 1 — Embracing the Winding Roads
SESSION FOCUS	Recognize how our definition of arrival shapes the way we experience waiting, detours, and progress.
SCRIPTURE ANCHORS	Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 3:5–6; Psalm 23:4; Isaiah 43:2; James 1:2–5
SUGGESTED LENGTH	60–75 minutes

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you picture finally reaching “There,” what do you see? How has that definition changed over time?
2. Which external measure of arrival — success, security, approval, healing, control, or something else — has carried too much weight in your life?
3. What unexpected curve are you currently facing, or what curve have you recently walked through?
4. When life does not follow the plan you expected, what is your first response: fear, control, withdrawal, blame, prayer, action, or something else?

LEADER WATCH-FOR

Avoid implying that delayed goals mean weak faith. Keep the distinction between desire, destination, and formation.

CLOSING PRACTICE

Invite each person to name one current “There” and one way they can remain present to the road they are actually on.

Progress and Discernment



READ BEFORE MEETING Chapter 2 — Embracing the Dance of Progression; Chapter 3 — Unveiling the Path to There

SESSION FOCUS Learn to recognize progress without demanding perfect certainty before taking the next faithful step.

SCRIPTURE ANCHORS Romans 8:1; Philippians 1:6; James 1:5; Proverbs 3:5–6; Psalm 25:4–5

SUGGESTED LENGTH 60–75 minutes

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where have you been treating your life as a series of disconnected events rather than a story still being written?
2. Which past chapter do you most often use as evidence that you are behind, disqualified, or unable to move forward?
3. What decision, transition, or unresolved question is currently asking for your attention?
4. What would change if you stopped requiring complete certainty before you took the next faithful step?

LEADER WATCH-FOR

Do not force certainty. Emphasize discernment, wise counsel, responsibility, and the next faithful step.

CLOSING PRACTICE

Write down one decision you are facing and separate what you know, what you do not know, and the next responsible action available now.

Home, Identity, and the Inner Journey



READ BEFORE MEETING	Chapter 4 — The Path of Travelers; Chapter 5 — Embracing the Journey Within
SESSION FOCUS	Explore belonging, identity, grace, and the inner work that often accompanies the journey home.
SCRIPTURE ANCHORS	Luke 15:11–32; Psalm 32:3–5; Psalm 139:1–18; Psalm 139:23–24; Philippians 1:6
SUGGESTED LENGTH	60–75 minutes

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What has your version of the far country looked like: a place, a relationship, a habit, a goal, an identity, or a season of drift?
2. What promise did that far country make, and what did it actually provide?
3. Which modern version of “There” has most shaped your sense of worth?
4. What present-season reality have you been treating as a waiting room rather than part of your actual life?

LEADER WATCH-FOR

Give participants permission to name pain without public disclosure. Identity and “home” language can carry grief.

CLOSING PRACTICE

Invite participants to privately write: “Home, for me, means...” and “The part of myself I need to meet with honesty is...”

Repositioning and Returning



READ BEFORE MEETING Chapter 6 — Repositioning on the Journey; Chapter 7 — Embracing the Journey of Return

SESSION FOCUS Name drift honestly and consider what healthy repositioning, repentance, rest, or return may require.

SCRIPTURE ANCHORS Ephesians 5:15–16; Psalm 139:23–24; Matthew 11:28–30; Luke 15:17–20; Romans 5:8

SUGGESTED LENGTH 60–75 minutes

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where do you sense drift in your life right now: faith, relationships, health, work, money, rest, integrity, or identity?
2. What small habits or pressures may have contributed to that drift?
3. What do you most associate with home: safety, rest, belonging, acceptance, familiarity, peace, or something else?
4. Where have you been looking for home in achievement, relationships, money, image, control, or escape?

LEADER WATCH-FOR

Return and repositioning are not the same as going back to unsafe people or conditions. Boundaries may be faithful.

CLOSING PRACTICE

Choose one area of drift and identify one small repositioning step that is safe, wise, and realistic this week.

Beginning Again and Noticing God



READ BEFORE MEETING	Chapter 8 — Let the Journey Begin; Chapter 9 — Walking in Divine Footprints
SESSION FOCUS	Practice beginning again without shame and noticing God's presence in ordinary places.
SCRIPTURE ANCHORS	Genesis 12:1–4; 1 Kings 19:4–8; 1 Kings 19:11–13; Luke 5:16; Philippians 4:6–7
SUGGESTED LENGTH	60–75 minutes

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your current harbor — the place of familiarity, comfort, or protection you may be outgrowing?
2. What has been your “Houston” — a season, place, or circumstance that became an honest mirror?
3. What noise most often keeps you from noticing God's presence?
4. Where have you noticed a small but meaningful sign of care, provision, beauty, correction, or support recently?

LEADER WATCH-FOR

Beginning again can expose shame or exhaustion. Encourage support and honest limits rather than performance.

CLOSING PRACTICE

Keep a 7-day noticing list. Record one ordinary place each day where you noticed provision, beauty, conviction, support, or grace.

Forgiveness and Gratitude



READ BEFORE MEETING	Chapter 10 — The Pathway of Forgiveness; Chapter 11 — The Pathway of Gratitude
SESSION FOCUS	Hold forgiveness and gratitude with honesty without minimizing harm, grief, boundaries, or unresolved pain.
SCRIPTURE ANCHORS	Psalm 13; Ephesians 4:31–32; Romans 12:18–19; Psalm 103:1–5; Philippians 4:6–7
SUGGESTED LENGTH	60–75 minutes

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What wound, offense, or disappointment are you still carrying most heavily?
2. What has that wound cost you emotionally, spiritually, relationally, or practically?
3. What absence or unmet longing has been taking up the most space in your attention lately?
4. What good thing in your life have you begun to treat as ordinary or invisible?

LEADER WATCH-FOR

Forgiveness is not denial, immediate reconciliation, or removal of needed boundaries. Gratitude does not require minimizing pain.

CLOSING PRACTICE

Use two columns: “What still hurts” and “What is still good.” Let both be true without forcing either to cancel the other.

Wisdom and Divine Dialogue



READ BEFORE MEETING	Chapter 12 — Gathering Pebbles of Wisdom; Chapter 13 — Divine Dialogue
SESSION FOCUS	Gather what the road has taught you and practice honest, grounded prayer and discernment.
SCRIPTURE ANCHORS	Proverbs 1:5–7; James 3:13–18; Joshua 4:1–9; Romans 8:26–27; James 1:5; Proverbs 11:14
SUGGESTED LENGTH	60–75 minutes

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is one lesson the road has taught you that you do not want to forget?
2. Which experience are you tempted to turn into a quick explanation before you have fully grieved or understood it?
3. What does your current prayer life sound like: polished, rushed, honest, silent, angry, grateful, distant, or uncertain?
4. What part of your life have you been reluctant to bring honestly to God?

LEADER WATCH-FOR

Keep prayer and discernment grounded in Scripture, wisdom, and community rather than unchecked certainty about “hearing God.”

CLOSING PRACTICE

Write one honest prayer with no performance language, then identify one trusted person or source of wisdom that can help you discern your next step.

Crossroads, Reflection, and the Never-Ending Journey



READ BEFORE MEETING	Chapter 14 — At the Divine Crossroads; Chapter 15 — Reflections in Life's Mirror; Chapter 16 — The Never-Ending Journey
SESSION FOCUS	Reflect on what has changed, what remains unresolved, and how to continue the journey with open hands.
SCRIPTURE ANCHORS	Matthew 26:36–46; Proverbs 3:5–6; Psalm 139:23–24; John 15:4–5; Philippians 1:6; Romans 12:2
SUGGESTED LENGTH	60–75 minutes

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What crossroads are you facing right now?
2. What outcome are you gripping most tightly?
3. Where do you tend to look through the window rather than into the mirror?
4. What pattern in your life keeps repeating, and what might be beneath it?
5. How has your definition of “There” changed while reading this book?
6. What is one modern “There” you still long for, and how can you hold that desire with honesty and open hands?

LEADER WATCH-FOR

The book ends with ongoing formation, not perfect arrival. Avoid turning the final session into pressure to have everything resolved.

CLOSING PRACTICE

Write a short “road ahead” statement: what you are releasing, what you are carrying forward, and the next faithful step you want to take.

Scripture Focus by Session

These references are drawn from the manuscript's Scripture companion. Read the passages in your preferred Bible translation. The guide intentionally lists references rather than reproducing copyrighted translation text.

#	SESSION	SCRIPTURE ANCHORS
1	Redefining "There"	Psalms 119:105; Proverbs 3:5–6; Psalm 23:4; Isaiah 43:2; James 1:2–5
2	Progress and Discernment	Romans 8:1; Philippians 1:6; James 1:5; Proverbs 3:5–6; Psalm 25:4–5
3	Home, Identity, and the Inner Journey	Luke 15:11–32; Psalm 32:3–5; Psalm 139:1–18; Psalm 139:23–24; Philippians 1:6
4	Repositioning and Returning	Ephesians 5:15–16; Psalm 139:23–24; Matthew 11:28–30; Luke 15:17–20; Romans 5:8
5	Beginning Again and Noticing God	Genesis 12:1–4; 1 Kings 19:4–8; 1 Kings 19:11–13; Luke 5:16; Philippians 4:6–7
6	Forgiveness and Gratitude	Psalms 13; Ephesians 4:31–32; Romans 12:18–19; Psalm 103:1–5; Philippians 4:6–7
7	Wisdom and Divine Dialogue	Proverbs 1:5–7; James 3:13–18; Joshua 4:1–9; Romans 8:26–27; James 1:5; Proverbs 11:14
8	Crossroads, Reflection, and the Never-Ending Journey	Matthew 26:36–46; Proverbs 3:5–6; Psalm 139:23–24; John 15:4–5; Philippians 1:6; Romans 12:2

A SIMPLE SCRIPTURE RHYTHM

- Observe: What does the passage actually say in context?
- Reflect: What does it reveal about God, people, wisdom, faithfulness, or human need?
- Connect: How does it illuminate the chapter's journey theme?
- Apply: What faithful response fits the text without forcing certainty or oversimplifying pain?

Prayer, Practice & Leader Notes

FOUR CLOSING PRACTICES

1. The Road Ahead Prayer

Invite the group to ask for guidance without demanding a complete map.

2. The Surrender Practice

Name one outcome you cannot control and one responsibility you can faithfully carry.

3. The Gratitude Practice

Name one real pain and one real gift without forcing either to erase the other.

4. The Next Step Prayer

Ask for courage to take the next wise step with humility, support, and open hands.

LEADER DEBRIEF

- What moment in the session seemed to create the most honest engagement?
- Did anyone indicate a need for private follow-up or additional support?
- What question or activity should be adjusted next time?
- Where did the conversation remain unresolved, and is that okay?
- What is one thing I want to pray about before the next session?

NOTES
