

## Book Club Questions for "Lydia"

1. "Lydia" provides a unique perspective on the early Christian community and the events surrounding the stoning of Stephen through the eyes of Jesus' fictional younger sister. How does the novel offer insight into Lydia's experiences and emotions as she navigates her faith amidst persecution?
2. Jenifer Jennings portrays Lydia as a character torn between her desire for independence and her commitment to her family and faith. How does Lydia navigate this tension throughout the novel, and what internal conflicts does she grapple with?
3. The novel delves into Lydia's relationship with her oldest brother, Jesus, and the impact of his teachings on her understanding of faith and discipleship. How does Lydia's perception of Jesus evolve over the course of the story, and how does it influence her decisions and actions?
4. "Lydia" explores themes of love, loss, and forgiveness as Lydia grapples with the murder of her betrothed, Stephen. How does Lydia cope with her grief, and what role does forgiveness play in her journey toward healing and reconciliation?
5. The character of Lydia serves as a witness to the early Christian movement and the challenges faced by its followers in the face of persecution. How does Lydia navigate the dangers of her newfound faith, and what insights can we gain from her perspective on courage and resilience?
6. Jenifer Jennings incorporates elements of historical research and cultural context into "Lydia," offering insights into life in Jerusalem during the period following Jesus' death and resurrection. What details or descriptions from the novel helped you visualize the historical setting, and how did they enhance your reading experience?
7. Lydia encounters various challenges and obstacles throughout the novel, from familial expectations to personal tragedy. How does Lydia demonstrate resilience and determination in the face of adversity, and what moments in the novel highlight her strength?
8. The theme of justice and forgiveness is prevalent in "Lydia," as Lydia wrestles with the desire for retribution against Stephen's murderers and the call to forgive as her brother Jesus taught. How does Lydia's journey of faith and forgiveness unfold throughout the novel, and what lessons can readers draw from her experiences?
9. Lydia's role as a caregiver and supporter of new converts in Jerusalem is central to the narrative, as she seeks to embody the teachings of Jesus in her actions and relationships. How does Lydia's ministry shape her understanding of discipleship, and what insights can we gain from her example as a woman of faith and service?
10. In what ways does "Lydia" resonate with contemporary issues and experiences, despite being set in ancient times? Discuss how the themes of faith, love, and justice portrayed in the novel offer timeless lessons for readers today and reflect universal aspects of the human condition.