

Review – Please look over your notes from this weekend or the points below before your group meets.

"When we work, we work; when we pray, God works." Oswald Smith

Remember – you don't have to ask every question and cover all the material.

SHARE IT – Connecting with each other

- *Describe a situation in which someone kept asking you for something and then out of exasperation you gave in. Or describe one in which you exasperated someone else into giving you something.*

GO DEEP – Connect with the Scriptures

The disciples witnessed Jesus in prayer and noticed the strength, peace and power that He received. In Luke 11, the disciples ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. What is recorded by Luke is what we call the Lord's Prayer. It is from this teaching that Jesus springboards into the parable called The Friend at Midnight. Read [Luke 11:1-13](#).

Why do you think it was so important for the host to go in search of bread at midnight?

What did the friend with the bread have to consider within his family, neighbors, friend?

In Judaism, showing hospitality to guests is considered a commandment. When one knows of strangers who are hungry or need a place to relax, it becomes a legal obligation. Some rabbis consider the "bringing in of strangers" to be a part of "giving of loving kindness".

The sleeping friend had to be awakened and pestered into lending the bread, but God does not sleep and is never disturbed when we approach Him. We do not have to force Him into giving because He never gives reluctantly; giving is a major part of His nature. Although God is generous, we should pray perseveringly as David did, not being afraid to ask repeatedly according to His will.

Read [Psalm 7:6](#), [44:23-26](#), [86:1-17](#), [103:13-18](#); [Isaiah 49:15](#); [Matthew 6:30-33](#); [Luke 11:11-13](#).

Have you ever had the sense that God is like the man asleep in the house and we're trying to arouse Him to action?

If He knows there's a need, why do we even have to pray for it to be met?

Why doesn't He just take initiative and meet it?

Does God answer our prayers reluctantly?

To persist in prayer and not give up does not mean endless repetition or painfully long prayer sessions. Always praying means keeping our requests constantly before God as we live for Him day by day, believing He will answer. When we live by faith, we are not to give up; God may delay answering, but His delays always have good reasons. As we persist in prayer we grow in character, faith and hope.

Read [Luke 11:9-10](#); [Hebrews 4:16](#), [11:6](#); [James 1:5-8](#), [4:3](#); [1 John 3:18-24](#), [5:14-15](#).

What must we persistently do in prayer?

Does the text in Luke 11:9 mean that we have free reign to ask God for anything?

If not, how should we approach the throne of God?

How should our faith and trust in God help guide our prayers, petitions or requests?

Jesus uses the principle of human perseverance with a neighbor and emphasizes that if this is true among human neighbors, how much more will it be true of our perseverance with requesting the action of God? If someone keeps asking, the person may grant the request just to avoid the embarrassment of not helping. If that is true of sinful people, how much more will we receive gracious things from our heavenly Father who longs to give good gifts to his children!

NEXT STEPS – Applying the truth of Scripture to life

The disciples saw in Christ's life, not only prayer, but a prayer life which demonstrated a dependency upon and intimacy with the Father unlike anything else they had ever seen and they wanted to know the secret of this. Not just how to pray, the MECHANICS, but how in the sense of the MOTIVATION. The how aspect is included by Christ in His answer in Luke 11:2-13.

- Prayer should demonstrate a total consciousness of our need, a sense of our complete inadequacy along with a sense of God's complete adequacy and willingness. See 2 Corinthians 3:5.
- Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of God's ever present willingness.
- Prayer is not for emergency use only, when we get in a pinch and need someone to bail us out.
- Prayer is not an "Aladdin's Lamp" or a trip to the wishing well for our wants.
- By contrast, prayer is a means of intimate communion, fellowship, and dependence upon God the Father who has promised to work in and through us through His Son, just as God worked through Him.
- Prayer is for everyday living, moment by moment.
- Prayer is a means of claiming God's promises and knowing and becoming abandoned to God's will.

Why did the disciples need to be taught how to pray?

Why do we need to learn how to pray?

What opinions have you heard on how God responds to our prayers?

Do you find it easy or difficult to pray with boldness?

Read [Luke 11:9-10](#). "Ask and it will be given to you" is not a promise but a principle. As a general principle, it is true that if you ask you will receive, and if you seek you will find, and if you knock the door will be opened. But He is not referring to every particular case. God is not promising that you can ask Him for anything and in any manner, and you will receive it. But rather that He generally gives to those who ask. This is meant to motivate people to ask God for essential things seriously. And not to portray God as a wishing machine.

How can we ask, seek, and knock when we approach our heavenly Father?

What kinds of things do we—individually and collectively—usually ask for?

How might this passage change your expectations of prayer?

PRAY

Thank you, LORD God Almighty, for your generous grace that comes from your heart of love. In those times when prayer is hard and my frustrations mount, please help me persevere in prayer -- especially when nothing seems to be happening, prayer doesn't seem very exciting, and I am discouraged. Some things I have just stopped praying about. I've gotten discouraged and lazy. Forgive me. Fill me afresh with a bold faith filled with visions of the possibilities you desire to create through my prayers. Give me the courage and conviction to keep praying. In Jesus' name. Amen.