

The Persistency of Prayer January 29, 2023

Luke 11:5-10 (NLT) Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this story: “Suppose you went to a friend’s house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, ⁶ ‘A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.’ ⁷ And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can’t help you.’ ⁸ But I tell you this though he won’t do it for friendship’s sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence. ⁹ “And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

There are a lot of questions that come to mind when it comes to prayer.

- Should we keep praying for the same thing over and over? Isn’t that unbelief?
- What about when we ask for something and it seems that we aren’t getting a response? Should we just stop praying and accept that maybe it’s not God’s will?
- What should we do when we see that according to scripture it is God’s will yet we pray and nothing happens?

Why this story?

Jesus in responding to the request of one of his disciples to teach them to pray. After giving them the content of prayer, he tells them a parable pointing out the importance of being persistent in prayer. Regardless of what we may not understand one thing we must not do and that is to stop praying.

In Luke 18 He gives them a similar parable about a woman’s persistent plea to an unjust judge. What was the point he wanted them to understand?

“...men should always pray and never give up.” Luke 18:1

Let’s look at the people in the story. There are three friends in this story. One friend is traveling and shows up unexpectedly, at midnight, to his friend’s house and he seems to be hungry. His friend doesn’t have the resources to give him so he leaves the house and knocks on his other friend’s house to ask for three loaves of bread. But that friend is already in bed and doesn’t want to get up to answer the door because he and his family are already down for the night. But his friend refuses to give up and continues knocking until his friend can’t take it anymore and gives him what he wants.

The point of this story, that the disciples would have understood, was that in their culture if you showed up to a friend’s house with a need in the middle of the night they would not make

excuses and refuse to answer your knock. However, if they did you wouldn't stop knocking because your need is urgent and they are your friend.

This story is not a comparison but a contrast. Jesus wants them to understand that God is not asleep. Nor does He have to get worn down to get up and give us an answer. He does answer prayer maybe not always in the way or time we want it but He does answer.

Our role is to be persistent in prayer not tell God how to do His job.

Effective prayer starts with understanding that we are in a relationship with God.

In this parable it was a friend making a request to a friend. God is more than a friend is "Our Father which is in heaven..."

Hebrew 4:15-16 (ESV) For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Never feel like you cannot go to God because somehow you don't qualify. Prayer isn't about us qualifying ourselves but Christ through the work of the cross qualifying us and giving us access to the father's throne and heavenly resources.

Put for others first

The friend who is making the request isn't asking for himself he is asking for someone else. It's so easy for us to make prayer simply about what we need and want.

The model prayer he gave pointed to the fact that prayer shouldn't be a "me" focus but an "us" focus. "Give us our daily bread, forgive us our sins and lead us not into temptation".

It's not that we shouldn't ask for assistance, provision, grace or anything else we may need but that we should look beyond ourselves in prayer.

Ephesians 1:18 (ESV) I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers

Ephesians 6:18 (ESV) praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.

1 Timothy 2:1 (ESV) First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people

Philippians 2:3-4 (NLT) Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

To pray properly is to be occupied with the needs of others more than just our own.

How often should we pray for someone or something? Until we see the answer!

Luke 11:9-10 "And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

Keep on asking

We shouldn't be quick to throw in the towel. Our prayer should be constant and persistent. Faith doesn't quit just because things don't look like they haven't changed.

Jeremiah 33:3 (ESV) Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

James 1:5 (ESV) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

Keep on seeking

Keep reading the word. Growing in faith. Keep understanding what is God's will according to scripture. Whatever, you do don't stop until the door opens.

John 15:7 (ESV) If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

1 John 5:14-15 (ESV) And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

Keep on knocking

Don't stop expecting an answer. Don't give up and go away. Expectation isn't desperate. It is patient and rests in knowing that is a good Father and His timing is better than our but we will not stop expecting the answers to our prayer.

We also know that sometimes our hearts do not understand His will or His timing.
At times we must be willing to wait for God's yes to manifest.