

The Priority of Prayer

Luke 11:1-13

“THE PRIORITY OF PRAYER”
(Luke 11:1-13)
Two Outlines:

- I. A MODEL for prayer, 11:1-4
 - A. Three petitions center on God and His glory, vs 2
 - B. Three petitions center on man and His needs, vss 3-4
 - II. MOTIVATIONS for prayer, 11:5-13
 - A. Seen in the little parable, 5-8
 - B. Seen in some large promises, 9-13
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- I. The INFLUENCE of prayer, 11:1
 - A. Seen in the practice of Jesus
 - B. Seen in the precepts of John
- II. Our IGNORANCE of prayer, 11:1b
 - A. They went to the right Person – “Lord.”
 - B. They made the right petition – “teach us to pray.”
- III. His INSTRUCTIONS about prayer, vss 2-4

Note that all pronouns that refer to us in this prayer are *plural*. Jesus is “forcing” us to pray in the plural, as members of a family, as members of a fellowship of believers. We are to be “others” conscious as we pray, seeking the welfare of others and not just our own interests.

 - A. Three petitions that center on God and His glory, vs 2
 - B. Three petitions that center on man and his needs, vss 3-4
- IV. The IMPERATIVE of prayer, vs 6b

“I have *nothing* to set before him.” Remember, this is a parable about *prayer*. The bottom line: “The cupboard is bare, Thru lack of prayer.”
- V. IMPORTUNITY in prayer, vs 8

“Importunity” is *shameless impudence*, the insistence that will not take “no” for an answer.
- VI. The IMPROVEMENT of prayer, VS 8c.

“He will rise up and give him *as many as he needs*.”
- VII. The IMPACT OF PRAYER, VSS 9-13.
 - A. God will never give you in answer to your prayers anything that is *worthless* (from *His* point of view) to His purpose for you – “a *stone* is *worthless* when you need food (something worthwhile).
 - B. God will never give you in answer to your prayers anything that is *dangerous* (from *His* point of view) to His purpose for you – “a *serpent* and a *scorpion* are both positively *dangerous*”
 - C. God has invested the Holy Spirit into each of His children (since the Day of Pentecost), and now no Christian has to “ask” (vs 13) for the Holy Spirit. Cf. Matt 7:7 & Luke 11:13, and note the crucial but very slight change in the two verses. Now, the H. S. *translates* into all “good things” (cf Gala 5:22-23). So the H.S. is God’s “negotiable Person” invested in us. He translates into any “spiritual blessing” (Eph 1:3) we truly need. If the Holy Spirit will not translate into the “commodity,” we DON’T NEED IT... even if we think we do! This is not a carte blanche for anything we want...unless our “wants” are refined to agree with Him.

“Greatest Passage on Prayer in the Bible”

Luke 11

Outline:

1-13 (1-4) Jesus gives us a model for our prayer

1. Model

A. 3- God and His Glory

B. 3- Man and His Needs

(Many reasons our prayers are unanswered) 6 petitions in the prayer in 2 parts

2. Motivation for prayer (5-13)

A. Pictured in a Parable (5-8) Away from ourselves to a world that is in need

B. A set of promises expressed in 9-13

Secondary Outline:

1. Vs 1- We see the **influence** of a praying person and we see the natural ignorance about prayer. “I find myself very uncomfortable with that statement.” We doubt God.
2. Vs 2-4 – Jesus- His response, gives **instruction** of prayer
3. Vs 6- **Imperative** of prayer – do not have proper resources with God to pray
4. Vs 8- **Improvement** of our resources that prayer brings, He gives us whatever we need
5. Vs 9-12- **Impact** of prayer
6. Vs 13- God’s unlimited **intent** of prayer

Some of the lessons:

1. Influences of prayer: seen in the performance of 2 things, precepts that are taught by both. Jesus was praying. The model that Jesus practiced in praying that caused them to ask questions about prayer. The greatest argument for prayer is to see Jesus on His knees praying. If Jesus in humility prayed then in our deficiency we should pray. So, Jesus answered their request.

- A. They went to the right person
- B. They made the right petition
- C. They followed the right pattern

Influence seen in two things, the praying and the teaching of Jesus

2. Instruction- Vs 2-4 He said, “When” not “if”. It is taken for granted that a born again person prays. The Holy Spirit was your doctor at birth and did to you what a doctor does at your physical birth. Takes it by the feet from the Mother’s body, then holds the baby and strikes it on the back side and says “breath without ceasing.” A baby for 9 months is in a controlled environment without taking a breath and now in a world where it cannot survive without it. The doctor does something to make it take a breath. “If you slow down you will be sick, if you stop you’ll die. Christian and prayer: Once you are born a nature process, it begins with our involuntary crises – it is natural to pray. “When” not “if.” “When you pray “say” should we repeat this prayer exactly? Yes/No. Repeat it enough to get all the nature concepts but not where we make it artificial. Every pronoun that refers

to “us” is a plural pronoun. Not “my” but “our”, not “my daily bread” but “our daily bread” and on and on. Any sin a Christian commits sins against the entire body. Just like a finger is attached and cannot do anything independent of the body. The appeal of forgiveness is for the entire body. There is no singular pronoun in the model prayer. What is Jesus doing? He is forcing us to think in a family relationship with equal concern for other members of the body as we have for ourselves. To think and pray in plural: Cannot make a prayer selfish. The reason our prayers are not answered is we insist in turning the pronoun of “I” and “me.” He will not answer that prayer!

Vs 2- **“Our”** – members of a fellowship

“Father”- members of a family – intimacy with us

“in heaven” – pushes His far away

Perfect instructions on how to pray. A perfect balance for his intimacy involvement with you and the respect of His authority over our lives. Confident but not comfortable.

“Hallowed be Thy name, thy Kingdom come...” There is a comma. When the English Bible was made the English parliament argued over a week about this comma. “take the comma out” “...thy will be done.” The best way to live the Christian life is look into heaven, what is going on there and ask God to reproduce it here on Earth. Fellowship- look into heaven. (III: outpost, colony of heaven on earth –Phil. 3)

Vs 11- **Family bases for prayer- Son, Father relationship**, vs 13. Heavenly Father to children. Jesus gives 2 tiny but extremely powerful illustrations. With the emphasis on family relationships, puts into human terms. Son (Child of God), Father (Heavenly Father-God), asked for Bread (necessary, beneficial, valuable) but gives a stone? You could suck on a stone all day long and get no value from it. The son needs something worthwhile but gets something worthless. God will never give any of His children an answer to prayer anything that is “worthless”, we think they are of value, but not in God’s eyes – He will never answer these prayers. Next, fish, egg (snake, scorpion) major emphasis. Boy needs food, not give a stone (worthless) still hungry – boy still asks for food but the father offers a snake and a scorpion. What is he saying? They are positively dangerous. So now Jesus says not only will God give you something worthwhile, but also many things people pray for would be dangerous for the lives to His children. Closes with this “ye” major emphasis – “evil” is major emphasis. You are evil, you still know how to give (good) gifts (major emphasis) to your children. 2 Greek words for “good” – (good in appearance-Beautiful) but not here! Not an ornament out of you but an instrument of you. Inherently good for a purpose. Gifts that have a given purpose of the giving of it.

Matt7: 11 “If you being evil...” Evil –“good gifts”, God “Good things”????

The Holy Spirit is a translatable person. When God plants the Holy Spirit inside of you- He puts into the person with the ability to know “good things.” The Holy Spirit can be negotiated into any true need you have. You are wasting your breath when you are asking for “fruit of the Spirit.” Peace, joy, etc.

Negotiate that into you – the Holy Spirit lives in you! Our text: The Holy Spirit = “good thing” = Holy Spirit. All good things are ultimately in the person of the Holy Spirit. How polite have you been to the Holy Spirit? Is there an exchange? Bottom line in prayer is that the Holy Spirit interceded in us for us.

III. Vs 9-10, **3 verbs to describe prayer- Ask, Seek, and Knock**

3 different levels of prayer referred to: simple, more difficult, and very difficult, more effort with each level:

1. **Ask: A simple petition: He will answer the prayer if you ask or not**
Sometimes. God will answer it because He knows ahead of time. Why ask?
We need our relationship with Him more than we need it.
2. **Seek:** A search between you and the object we are after, more difficult then,
in the end we will find it so keep on searching.
3. **Knock:** This is the hardest. Not only a search but also a solid obstacle
between you and the object. This involves perseverance and intensive effort, growing with
each level. Knocking: your prayer for other people where their “will” is involved. He will not
force the answer to your prayer, but has means of persuading them. So, the result is linked to
your vocation with Him in prayer. Accomplished two things at once: Builds strength and
resistance and slowly addresses the solid obstacle in your way to answer the prayer.

Vs 10: All 3 are used again, but be careful what it says:

1. **Ask: If anyone who ask (present tense) – receives (present tense)**
2. **He who seeks (present tense), finds (present tense) go on seeking-go on finding**
3. **Knock (present tense) – other verb will be opened in (future tense) the knocking must take place now but the door will be opened sometime in the future.**

Look again:

1. **Ask: The one asking will receive – same person I ask, I receive**
2. **Seek: The one seeking will find- I seek, I find**
3. **Knock: The one knocking does not open the door – I knock, someone else opens. Other persons are involved in some of your prayers. Do not stop praying because there is an obstacle – pray perseveringly, never stop praying for that person, because someone else is in control of the door. It is our business to knock and God’s to open.**

ILL: Spain Art Work: Single Ox, I furrow after another, in the middle of the field, stops to pray when the bells of the church ring and an angel is finishing the row for him with a saying at the bottom “No time Lost.”

When you spend time in prayer –you do not lose time – you gain eternity. So, Jesus asked us to live-prayer. Pray without ceasing. More than words, but a relationship, a heart open to God. II Samuel 7, David sat down before the Lord – sit in exposure to Him. An exchange of hearts takes place. Better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without heart. An open exposure to God in prayer in our will, all our activities and actions.

Keep on asking – you will receive

Keep on seeking – you will find

Keep on knocking – and one day you will say “thank you”

ILL: “Yes, I know, I opened the door.”