



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Jesus' Encouragement for Prayer

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In the Gospel According to Luke (AD 60-61), having just taught the disciples the essence of prayer (11:1-4), Jesus went on to illustrate the spirit of desperation for dependence upon God *through* prayer. In the days of Jesus' time, many traveled in the evening in order to avoid the heat of the day. In this parable the traveler arrives near the mid-night hour. The late arrival of the traveler confronted the host with an embarrassing situation. That day's bread had been already consumed, and furthermore it was expected that there would be supplied more than the bare necessities for the expected guest. It became imperative that the host become shamelessly persistent in seeking from his neighbor necessary goods in order to accommodate his newly arrived guest. "That story," Jesus said, "will tell you about prayer."

*And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:5-13, NKJV)*

**The ritual-bound disciples needed to learn of a prayer-answering Heavenly Father.** The disciples had begun to learn the content of a prayer that reflects the right kind of heart (11:1-4). Now they needed to learn of the anticipatory attitude of prayer and the generous heart of a prayer-answering Father.

Jesus wisely contrasts earthly hesitation with heavenly anticipation. A parable by nature is a story set along side of. Sometimes parables show similarities and other times a contrast. In this parable there is a stark contrast made. What contrasts do you understand from what you know to be true about God?

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The willingness of God does not absolve us from the intensity or earnestness of prayerful living. Our persistence and sincerity does not guarantee an expected answer. However, our urgency does convey our passion for the prayer to be answered.

**We are not wrestling gifts from the tightly gripped hands of a reluctant Father.** We are going to the One Who knows our needs better than we know them ourselves, and Whose heart towards us is perfect in indescribable love. He is a wise and judicious Father and knows how to mediate His blessings for our well-being and His delight and glory. If He withholds the thing that we request it must be understood by us that He would be doing so in His infinite wisdom because He has something truly better for us. There is no such thing as unanswered prayer. Waiting may be an answer. No might be an answer. Yes might be the answer. But in all—it is the answer of the love and wisdom of God.

### For Your Consideration:

- Have you given up on praying for a thing that seems to fit the will of God?
- Where does "No" fit into your persistence in prayer?
- Do you view God rightly as a gracious and wise Father?
- Are you ever "caught" in prayer? Is your life characterized by persistent prayer?

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## BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: SESSION OR HEARING WEDNESDAYS AT 7:30AM, STATEHOUSE RM. 44

STAFF, LOBBYISTS AND CAPITOL SQUARE COMMUNITY: WEDNESDAYS AT NOON, STATEHOUSE RM.44