Questions on Luke 11vv 1-13

**Getting started**

*A lady told me recently that she had started coming to Church 25 years ago because she had attended a service and heard someone pray, and was so struck by how natural, intimate, and expectant her prayers were.*

1. Can you remember being impressed by hearing someone pray, and this made you want to be able to pray like that?

*Today, we’re going to listen to some really helpful teaching by Jesus, the one who had spent the whole of eternity communing with his Father, and who can teach us profound lessons about prayer….*

**Into the text**

1. First things first - Jesus teach us to whom we speak in prayer (v2). How conscious of this when you pray?
2. What should we start off by praying for (v2)? Is this where you tend to start in prayer? How might this make us pray for events like the Funday, for your prayers for friends and family, for your prayers for our country and the world?
3. Jesus encourages us to be real in our prayers about the extent of our personal needs for help. Why do you think he zooms in on the things he does in v4? Is this what tends to fill your prayers for yourself?

[*NB – if your group did a separate study on Ch 11v1-4, you will have covered the territory in vv1-4. So perhaps a couple of summary questions, for those there last time, and for people who weren’t!]*

1. Do you find you can identify with the chap called Peter in my sermon, who knew the theory of prayer, but rarely prays?
2. What does the little story of the man responding to the midnight caller in vv5-8 teach us about how we can come to God in prayer, and how he can be trusted to responded to our needs?
3. Similarly, what does the story about the dad giving good gifts to the children he loves teach us about God, and encourage us to pray?
4. Why do you think the Jesus promises the Holy Spirit, rather than just things, to those who ask him? What does this reveal about our deepest need, and God’s willingness to provide for it?

**Personal application**

1. The climax of Jesus’ teaching on prayer is vv9/10. He wants us to be those who regularly and expectantly, ask, seek and knock on the very door of Heaven. Does this describe your prayer at the moment? How can this teaching give fresh impetus and vitality to your prayer lives?
2. What can you do to put this important, practical, spiritual teaching into practice this week?

**Sermon on Luke 11vv5-13**

I am sure that on occasions you’ve watched someone else doing something really well, and your eyes have opened wide in admiration…

* Maybe it’s at work, and you’ve been wowed at how a colleague has won a new client?
* Or you’ve been amazed at how someone has created a perfect garden?
* Or you’ve been impressed -as I was at Stan’s funeral this week- at what a loving father someone has been to his sons.

When we see something really good, it makes us want to learn the secret of how they’ve managed to do it!

 Well, in Luke 11, one of Jesus’ disciples has been watching Jesus at prayer (image of Jesus praying), and he’s been **deeply impressed** at the way that Jesus prayed to God.

It’s made him want to learn **more** about prayer, so he comes to Jesus (image Jesus and disciples) with a request .. ‘Teach us to pray’

That sort of request was ‘*music to Jesus’ ears’* because he longed to help people know how they could speak to the God who made them, loved them, and had the power to answer prayer more than they could possibly imagine….

So in vv1-4, Jesus instructs us in **how** we are to pray.

We are to pray to a God who is not some scary rather remote authority figure, but who has become through Jesus ‘Our Father’

And as we come to God as father, we should pray first and foremost **not** for ourselves, but Pray for God- for his name to be honoured and his kingdom to come’

We are to long that people see God as truly great, worthy of the number 1 place in their lives, and that more and more people would take him as their King….

That’s a big prayer, I know, but it’s where we should start- Jesus says…

But Jesus also encourages us to ‘pray for yourself’ …

‘Pray’ says Jesus for ‘Your daily needs’;

Plead regularly with him to forgive you (Your forgiveness) since we muck up each day!

Ask him urgently for his protection (Your protection) leading you **not** into temptation

~ We looked at these verses last week, and it was a great sermon Ben gave, so if you weren’t with us, do listen to it on our You Tube channel this week…

~ But if you **were** with us, can I ask you this question… ‘*Has Jesus teaching on prayer* **made any difference** *to the way you’ve actually prayed over the last 6 days?’*

I hope it has, but I suspect for some of us, we may either have forgotten it, OR be rather like a friend of mine, a maths teacher, called Peter…(Image of man)

Peter would have agreed with every word said in last week’s sermon

‘I know **how** to pray’ Peter would say….

‘But I don’t pray’ Peter would sadly acknowledge- or at least I don’t pray that much. It’s occasional, often rather formal, and almost aways prompted by a crisis. It certainly ISNT the oxygen I breathe in my spiritual relationship with God…

~ Do you find that **you** can be rather like Peter yourself?

I suspect that many of us would say that we can be **just like that**- knowing we **should** pray, but actually not being that quick to come to God in prayer….

Well to help ‘Peters’, to help people like you and me, Jesus told 2 little stories to **encourage** us to come to God in prayer **regularly, confidently and expectantly**. If we grasp the point of these 2 stories, it will **revolutionise** our prayer lives, so come to them eagerly, as we turn to Luke 11vv5-13 (p 1042 Bibles)

The first story encourages us to realise that (*image of 4 people with words*:- **God is the best of all friends’)**

I was struck by a comment on FaceBook this week. It was from a person who’d just enjoyed a special holiday with her ‘besties’….

I’m sure many of you will have come across that word, If not, it means our very best friends – people we love, trust, and can talk with about anything and everything.

\*\* Jesus wants us to see God – Almighty God- as **our bestie**- since if we do, it will make us open our mouth to him in prayer….

So, in vv 5-8, Jesus tells a story about a man going to his ‘bestie’ for help…

This man is in a bit of a pickle! A friend has turned up at his home, apparently unexpectantly and late at night, and needs feeding. But as the man opens his larder door, he finds it is empty and he has nothing to give his friend. What can he do? *‘Ah’* he thinks *‘I’ll go to my good friend down the street and ask him to lend me some food.*

So, he sprints down the road and knocks on the door of his friend (image of man knocking on a door) saying ‘Help!’

It has to be said that the friend is less than pleased by this midnight caller! ‘Don’t bother me’ he replies. ‘The door is locked, and I’m in bed, as are our kids, so it’s not easy for me to help you out..’

I’m sure our sympathies are likely to be with this friend, and we might feel it was rather insensitive for the man to hammer at his door in the wee small hours of the night. We might even feel rather unsympathetic to the guest who’s arrived unexpectedly and rather late in the day, and whose arrival has caused this problem!

But to get the point of the story, we need to realise a few things about travel and hospitality in those days…

* People often travelled in the evening since it was cooler.
* It was not easy to let people know the time when they would arrive, since no mobiles existed
* There were no fridges and fridge freezers to store food.
* There were no late night supermarkets or fast food take outs that could supply food in the middle of the night
* Above all, we need to realise that hospitality was a **number 1 duty**. If a guest was not fed, this would bring shame upon the host, a shame that would go deep and last a long time…

So, when this man goes to knock on the door of his friend, at a time that was highly inconvenient to him, it was driven by a **real need**, and this leads to the punchline of the story in v8

**8**I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet **because of your shameless audacity**[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+11%3A1-13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-25414e)] he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

Because of this man’s boldness, his persistence, his jaw-dropping audacity at being wiling to disturb his friend so late in the night, that friend will respond to his friend’s requsts and give him all he needs

The point Jesus is making is surely this… **God** is the best of all friends. You never need to worry that when you pray, you will find him in his pyjamas, and grumpy about being disturbed! He Is constantly alert to the prayers of his friends, and has the power to meet needs and hopes that you express to him in your prayers

So we don’t need to scratch our head and think what the application of this might be. It’s there in black and white in v9

**9**“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. **10**For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

*‘Ask, seek, knock on the very door of Heaven’*, Jesus says, ‘*to the God who is* ***even more*** *eager to respond to your needs than the man in this story…’*

I’m sure we can grasp this point, but in vv11-13, Jesus sharpens it, and makes it even more personal and powerful with his 2nd picture

‘*Come to God in prayer’* says Jesus, for ‘God is the most loving of all fathers..’

Think of a human father, Jesus says, faced with a request for food from his kids.

‘*Dad, can we have fish and chips tonight*? (Image of fish and chips)

‘*Sure kids’*, so out the dad goes to the chippie, and returns with a bag containing snake (image of snake) and chips !

Or move to the breakfast table. ‘*Dad , can we have boiled egg and soldiers (image of egg) for a change*?’ ‘*Sure kids’* and after a few minutes the dad serves up boiled scorpion (image of scorpion) !!

~ Is either of these going to happen?

Well,no! Listen to Jesus’ comment

**13**If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children,

how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

‘*Look!*’ Jesus is saying ‘*since human parents – even though we are far from perfect- know how to, and indeed long to give good gifts to their kids, HOW MUCH MORE will God , the most loving Father of all, give the best of all gifts to his children when they come to him in prayer….’*

And do note at the end of v13 **what** Jesus says God will give to his children.

It’s not just things, like food and money and possessions, **but a person**, the Holy Spirit of God…

If that surprises you as the supreme answer to our prayers, it shows how different we are in terms of our hopes to the best of God’s people in Old Testament times

They were waiting for God to fulfil his promise to pour out his Spirit not just on a few VIPs, but on **ALL** people….

This would happen through Jesus who would baptise people with the Holy Spirit, and this was seen powerfully on the Day of Pentecost.

This Holy Spirit would draw people to Jesus, bring them to new spiritual life in Jesus, and then fill them with new desires, new powers and new hopes, as He began that lifelong work of transforming them more fully into the likeness of Jesus….

Jesus knew it was not things, but the person of the Holy Spirit we most need, and that’s why he finishes v13 as he does, promising that God will for sure continue to fill his people with his Holy Spirit as we ask for that to happen…

Well I hope that these 2 simple pictures will do for you what Jesus **intended** them to do.

To make you want to **pray**, to be **excited** about prayer, for it is surely the most amazing privilege that we can come before the One who sits on the throne of the universe as the best of all friends (image of friends again), the most loving of all parents (image of child with mum)

In the light of that, let’s come to Him, every day this week, indeed every day of our lives, joyfully, confidently and expectantly. Let’s hear and apply Jesus’ words..

**9**“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. **10**For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

[*Prayer*]