

Frequently Asked Questions: How long should I keep praying? October 27- 28, 2007

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished one of his disciples came to him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

Luke chapter 11, verse 1 (793)

- ✓ Jesus would often find quiet, out of the way places to pray.
- ✓ The disciples could have asked Jesus to teach them to do anything but they wanted to know how to pray.
- ✓ If Jesus needed prayer and his disciples desired it so much then why don't I pray more?

He said, "This is how you should pray: "Father, may your name be honored. May your Kingdom come soon. Give us our food day by day. And forgive us our sins- just as we forgive those who have sinned against us. And don't let us yield to temptation."

Luke chapter 11, verses 2-4 (793)

- ✓ Keep it simple.
- ✓ Keep it about God.
- ✓ Keep it humble.
- ✓ Keep it specific.

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 would say to him, 'A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.' And suppose he would call out from his bedroom, 'Don't bother me. The door is locked for the night, and we are all in bed. I can't help you.'

Luke chapter 11, verses 5-7 (793)

- ✓ In middle eastern culture the homes were small and there would be many people living in the same house.
- ✓ A house would be one room consisting of an eating area, sleeping area and a place for the animals.
- ✓ Once the lights were out for the night people would not rise till morning.
- ✓ It would have been a great inconvenience to be disturbed at midnight because your entire family would be awakened.

1. Be persistent in your prayers.

But I tell you this-though he won't do it for friendship sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence. "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. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And the door is opened to everyone who knocks.

Luke chapter 11, verses 8-10 (793)

2. Persistent prayer is about declaring my dependence upon God.

Father, hallowed be your name. *Luke chapter 11, verse 2 (NIV)- It's declaring God's greatness. God leads the humble in doing right, teaching them His way. Psalm 25 verse 9 (424)*

- Asking for help is a sign of humility & dependency
- Not asking for help is a sign of pride
- God's wants totally dependent children.
- God is not bothered by your persistence, in fact he may be honored by it.

3. Persistent prayer is about surrendering my will.

“May your kingdom come soon” *Luke chapter 11, verse 2 (793)*

- Prayer is not asking to get my will done in heaven but asking to get God’s will done on earth.
- When we pray we are inviting God to unleash his plan and power into our lives.
- Sometimes when I keep asking, seeking and knocking God changes my will.

Persistent prayer is also about surrendering my worry.

4. Persistent prayer is effective.

The Lord responds to our prayers...

- ✓ He responded to Abraham’s prayers to spare Sodom & Gomorrah. Genesis. 18
- ✓ Israel’s battle with the Amalekites turned to victory as Moses prayed. Exodus 17
- ✓ After Nehemiah fasted & prayed God granted his request to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah 1:1-4

The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

James chapter 5, verse 16 (932)

- Your persistent prayer has the potential to move the heart of God.
- God releases His grace and power when we pray!
- Prayer may change you more than it changes your circumstances.

Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere. Ephesians chapter 6, verse 18 (898)

5. Be persistent in your prayers because your heavenly Father enjoys being with you!

For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And the door is opened to everyone who knocks.

If you sinful people 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 chapter 11, verses 10 & 13 (793)

Keep asking, keep seeking and keep knocking!

This study is based on the “Hard Questions” study from Saddleback Church in California where Rick Warren is the lead pastor. Rick is the best-selling author of The Purpose Driven Life and Saddleback is a dynamic church that God is working through to change tens of thousands of lives and churches around the world. Visit them at www.Saddleback.com.