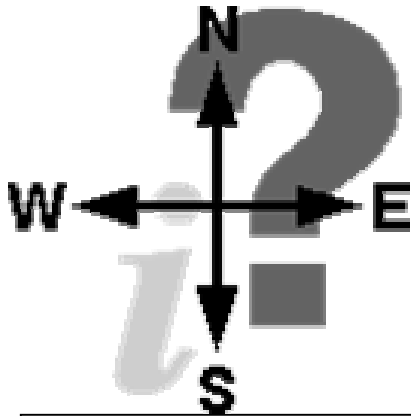


LIFE Community Sermon Notes



What about
unanswered prayer?

Luke 18:1-14

The Parable of the Persistent Widow

1Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. 3And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

4"For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, 5yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!' "

6And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

9To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: 10"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. 12I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

13"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

14"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Also Genesis 18:16-33, Exodus 32:9-14 and
Luke 11:1-12

LIFE Community Sermon Notes

Sunday, July 8

Big Idea: Everyone should approach God with shameless audacity because of four pictures of prayer we see in Scripture

Key Verse:

Luke 11:8

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] he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

Opening Question: Share about an experience you had with prayer (either answered or unanswered).

Questions in **bold** below are suggested focus questions.

Sections in *italics* and/or parenthesis are for the leaders notes.

This week we focused on unanswered prayer. In the message Jim Ennis took us through various passages presenting us with pictures of prayer. Each picture shows us something different about prayer, either something we should do or should not do. The questions are designed to be used with one, a few or all of these pictures.

Observation Questions

1. **How is prayer spoken about in the passage you selected?** (*Is it a teaching, a story a parable, an interaction?*)
2. **What are you taught about prayer in this passage?** (*What are the actual learning points?*)
3. Describe the environment and setting of the passage (*who are the key characters, what are the issues or needs surrounding the prayer setting, what are God's responses, what do the characters in the story do?*).
4. Who is the original audience of the passage?

Interpretation Questions

1. **What did the original audience learn about prayer from the passage?**
2. What did the original audience learn about God (who He is, what He does, etc)?
3. **Were all the prayers answered as hoped? Why or why not?**

Application Questions

1. Jim shared the following definitions of prayer with us. Which ones did you like and why?:
 - A. Eugene Peterson: "*Prayer is where we establish continuities in Jesus' life.*"
 - B. Philip Yancey: "*Prayer is keeping company with God and realizing God is already there.*"
 - C. Dallas Willard: "*Prayer is a conversation about what you and God are doing together.*"
 - D. Jim Ennis (?): "*Prayer is the language of God's people*"
2. **Jim ended his message sharing with us that we may not get the answers we want about unanswered prayer, but he left us with pictures of God working with his people regarding prayer. In the fog of our spiritual lives we are able to trust these pictures from these passages. What did these pictures tell you about prayer?**
3. **What did these pictures tell you about God**

LIFE Community Sermon Notes

4. How will these pictures help you in your future prayers (whether answered or not)?

Close your group time together by spending a significant time in prayer for each other, your needs and fears. Don't forget to pray for others too...those not saved, those on mission trips, those who are need a special touch from God this week.

Leader's Notes

1. As a leader choose to work on one or more of the passages and then answer the questions accordingly.
2. You may want to break the group up into smaller huddle groups to each focus on a passage.
3. Plan your group time so there is enough time to pray at the end.

Resources

Fresh Wind Fresh Fire:
Jim Cymbala

Prayer:
Richard Foster