

Daily Discipleship

Sunday, July 24-30 (C) - Luke 11:1-13

Stories of Discipleship: *A Seeker's Story*

Focus Question: *How does Jesus want you to pray?*

word of life

[Jesus] was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' Luke 11:1 (NRSV)

Read Luke 11:1-13

"Lord, teach us to pray." One doesn't expect the disciples of Jesus to ask him such a question. Don't all people know how to pray? But they had witnessed Jesus taking time for prayer throughout his ministry. He prayed at his baptism (Luke 3:21), before he called his disciples (Luke 6:12), as he was transfigured on the mountain (Luke 9:28-29), and at other times. In fact, he was praying just before the disciples asked him to teach them to pray.

Somehow the disciples must have heard about John the Baptist teaching his followers how to pray. Thus, they want to learn from their own rabbi Jesus. Jesus responds by teaching them the Lord's Prayer. It is a simple prayer, but reveals much of the teachings of Jesus.

1. *How did you learn the Lord's Prayer?*
2. *How is the prayer in Luke similar or dissimilar to the Lord's Prayer used by your congregation?*
3. *How do you keep God's name holy?*
4. *What does it mean to pray "your kingdom come"?*
5. *What is included in daily bread?*
6. *This prayer assumes we forgive everyone indebted to us, but what if we don't forgive?*

Jesus continues his teachings on prayer with an illustration of a person in need at midnight. He visits his friend's home and persists making his request for bread until his sleeping friend complies.

7. *Give an example of how someone's persistence (perhaps even nagging) paid off.*
8. *What can we learn about prayer through this illustration?*

Next, Jesus speaks directly and clearly to his disciples. When it comes to prayer, we are to ask, seek, and knock. Prayer is not passive, but the one who prays is to be an active participant in prayer. Jesus promises his disciples that their requests will be met. "For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened." (Luke 11:10 NRSV)

He tries to relate prayer to their personal lives and their care for their own children. If a child asks a parent for something to drink because of thirst, the parent responds. If a child wants fish, no loving parent would give a snake.

God is loving and desires to answer our prayers with good gifts. Unfortunately, like children we sometimes do not always ask for fish or eggs, but insist on unhealthy things for our life. We cannot always see what is for our best. Fortunately, God knows our needs.

9. *How has God responded to your prayer requests?*
10. *Summarize the teachings of Jesus on prayer.*

word among us

Annie had never learned to swim, but the first time she entered the swimming pool, she fell in love with the water. She approached the lifeguard meekly and asked, "Teach me to swim."

Jake loved chemistry. Finally, he made the connection between cooking and chemistry. He realized cooking was one big chemistry experiment. He became excited to learn all he could about cooking. So, he begged his grandmother, "Teach me to cook."

1. *Give an example of needing instruction in order to learn.*
2. *Give an example of needing a second instructor to hone your skills.*
3. *What is the benefit of additional instruction?*

People learn in different ways. Some need personal instruction, while others love to learn on their own through reading or hands-on activities.

4. *Reflect on your own style of learning.*
5. *How have you learned best about prayer?*

Probably the disciples knew how to pray, but they wanted to have a deeper understanding about the way Jesus prayed. So they asked Jesus to teach them to pray. The outcome of that question is the Lord's Prayer as well as other teachings on prayer.

6. *How often do you pray the Lord's Prayer?*
7. *What is the role of the Lord's Prayer in your own devotions?*
8. *How does the Lord's Prayer reflect the priorities of Jesus?*
9. *What is the hardest petition for you in the Lord's Prayer?*

Jesus modeled prayer by praying, particularly at key points in his life. Prayer was not a theory to be pondered, but a practice to be lived. Jesus placed prayer as a priority in his own life. Jesus kept close to God and God's will through prayer.

10. *If Jesus needed time to pray, why wouldn't we need to pray?*
11. *What happens to us when we do not pray on a regular basis?*

Prayer is not something to check off a list and declare it finished for the day. The story of the friend who visits at midnight and persists until he gets food reminds us to be persistent in prayer. Pray like we mean it and depend on God to reply.

12. *How would you rate your prayer life?*
13. *What can you learn from the midnight visitor who persists until his request is granted?*
14. *How might you take time this week for prayer? Use Luke 11:1-13 as part of your daily devotions. Ask God what you need to be asking for in your prayer.*

Prayer

Lord, teach us to pray. Teach us to pray with persistence, trusting in God to hear and respond. We thank you for your invitation to come to you in prayer like a child comes to a loving parent. Amen.

Dig Deeper

Genesis 18:20-32

last word

Pray, pray, and pray.



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Written by John and Robin McCullough-Bade

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