

Prayers God Always Answers— Persistent Prayers



LUKE 18:1–7

¹ And he told them a parable to the effect that *they ought always to pray and not lose heart.* ² He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. ³ And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ ⁴ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’ ” ⁶ And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. ⁷ And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?”

God often waits for us to cry out repeatedly in order to teach us the source of power. So, when you pray . . .

P.U.S.H.

(Pray Until Something Happens.)

1. Keep praying because when you are waiting on God, it's always too early to quit.

Luke 18:1

¹ And he told them a parable to the effect that *they ought always to pray and not lose heart.*

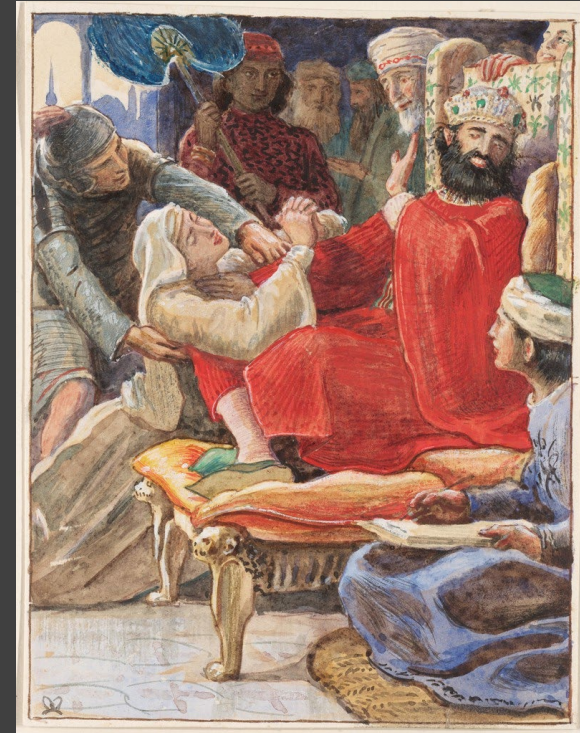
- Jesus told the parable of the persistent widow to teach us that we should *always pray* and *never give up.*

“And there was a widow in that city who kept coming [ἤρχετο—imperfect tense of ἔρχομαι] to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’”



⁴ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps **bothering** me, I will give her justice, so that she will not **beat me down** by her **continual coming**.’ ”

- **κόπος**, *kopos*— *trouble, a bother, work, toil*
- **ὑποπιάζω**, *hypopiazō*, to blacken an eye, *strike in the face, give a black eye*. Figuratively, to bring someone to submission by constant annoyance, *wear down*.





⁶ And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. ⁷ And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?”

“Americans never
quit.”

—Gen. Douglas
MacArthur

- That should be doubly true of Christians.
- Never give up.



He wasn't talking about prayer, but he might have well have been, when Adlai Stevenson said:

“On the plains of hesitation bleach the bones of countless millions who at the dawn of victory sat down to rest, and resting died.”



- (In other words: it ain't over till it's over.)
- Never ever give up.
- Prayer is like baseball: stopping at 3rd base adds no more to the score than striking out at the plate.
- Never ever give up.

2. Keep praying because God loves reckless audacity.

At the same time Jesus taught his disciples the *Lord's Prayer*, he told another story to encourage us to **be persistent** in our prayers.



Luke 11:5–9

⁵ And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; ⁷ and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? ⁸ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his **impudence** [*ἀναίδεια, anaideia*]

he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹ And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

- The word translated *impudence* in Luke 11:8, ἀναίδεια (*anaideia*), means a *reckless audacity* that *shamelessly persists* regardless of what anyone else may think.
- This is the only place in the NT where this word is used. And it's used here to describe the *persistent, never-quit spirit* that should characterize our prayers.



The man only asked for **three loaves**, but he gets more than he asked for. The friend gives him **“whatever he needs.”**

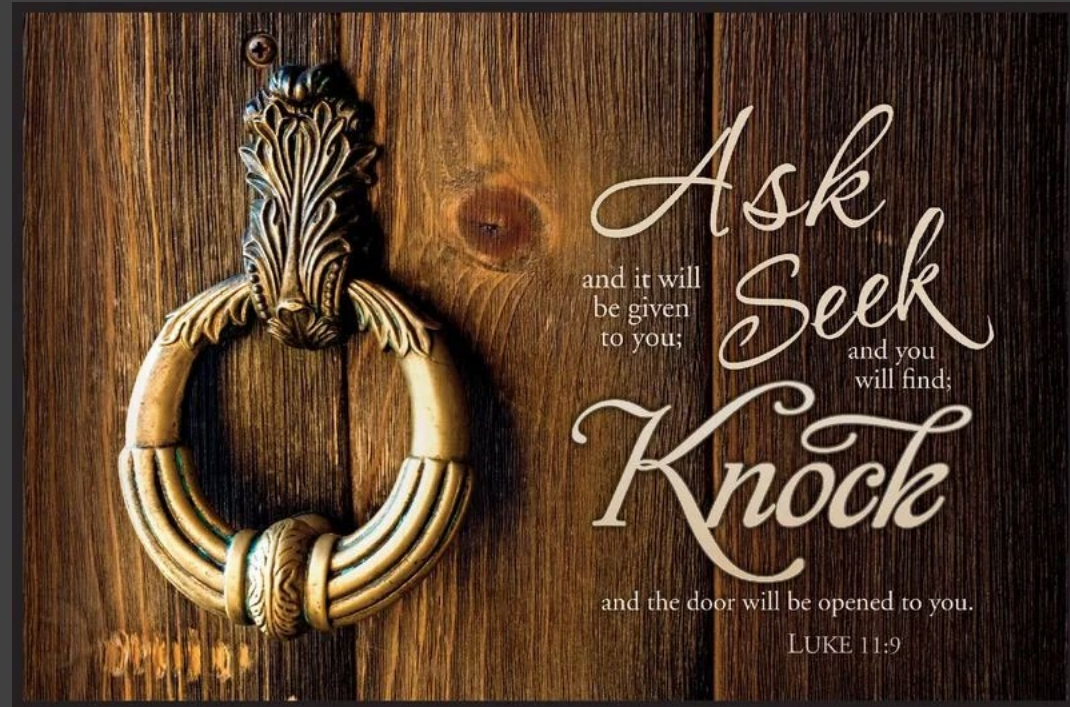
This parable is also a great lesson about the power we have to bless people through **intercessory prayer**.

- There was a **hungry friend** who needed help.
- There was a **praying friend** seeking the help.
- There was a **mighty friend** who gave all the help that was needed.

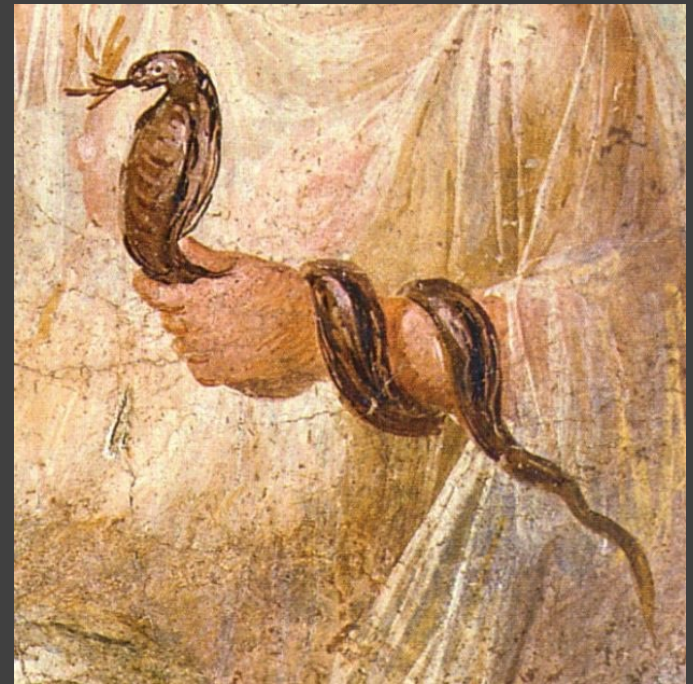
3. Keep praying because God know how to give good gifts to those who ask him.

Luke 11:9–13

⁹ “And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.



¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”



- Both Luke and Matthew record Jesus' teaching his disciples the Lord's Prayer, and his instructions to "ask . . . seek . . . knock," with the assurance that God knows how to give *good things* to those who ask him.
- In Matthew, Jesus says exactly that:

Matthew 7:11

¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven *give good things to those who ask him!*

- When the Lord repeats this teaching in Luke, he specifies the *highest* and *most important gift* God can give: "*the Holy Spirit.*"

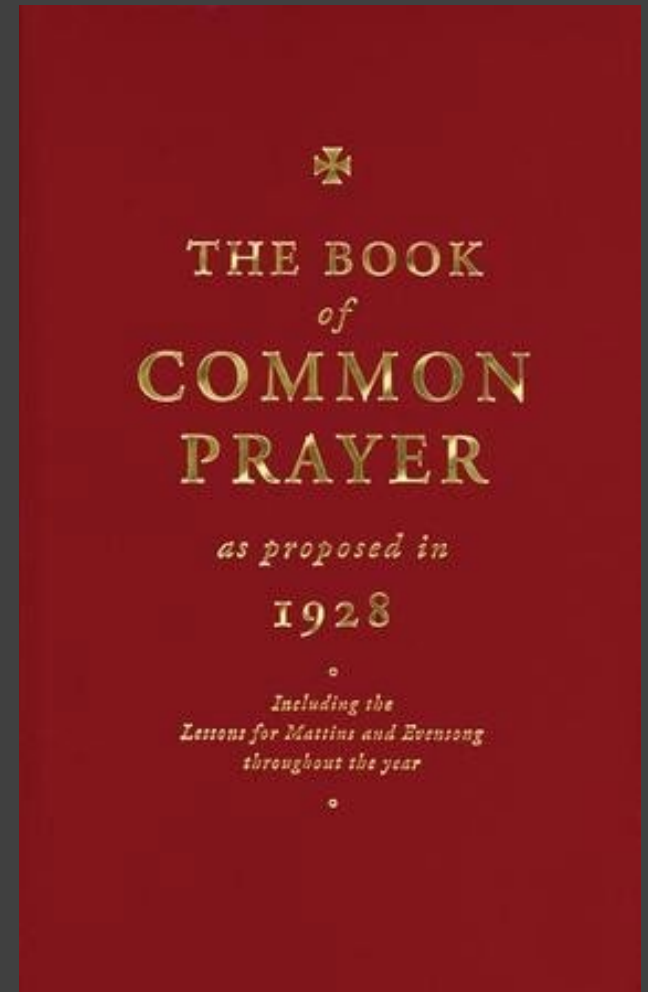
- God is so good, that even when, in our ignorance and sinfulness, we ask for something we shouldn't, *he gives us what is best.*
- Don't ever worry about whether or not your prayer is very good.



- **God can sort out anything you can pray.**

One of my favorite collects in
The Book of Common Prayer asks:

Almighty God, to whom our
needs are known before we
ask: Help us to ask only what
accords with your will; and
those good things which we
dare not, or in our blindness
cannot ask, grant us for the
sake of your Son Jesus Christ
our Lord. *Amen.*



Conclusion

The point is: ask, seek, knock, pray, and keep on praying, because when you're waiting on God in prayer . . .

. . . it's always too early to quit!

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