

KEEP PRAYING // Luke 18:1-8

Message from the series, The Gospel of Luke

There are two main answers to the question: “What is prayer?” The first is that prayer is both communication and communion—we are talking to God and he is talking to us through his Word, and through this communication we experience communion with God. Secondly, prayer is the means by which God accomplishes his will—he uses your prayers to bring about his plan. In this first parable of Luke 18, Jesus promotes persistence in prayer. If you’re struggling with prayer, don’t overthink it—just keep praying.

Main Idea: We ought to keep praying because Jesus said so.

1. The Purposes of the Parable

The parable points to two purposes: first, that we should pray. The narrative of scripture indicates that prayerlessness is really Godlessness.

- a. If I don’t pray, it means: I’m out of step with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us the desire to pray and helps us to know what to pray (Romans 8:26). As Jesus said, it is better to have God inside you than beside you (John 16:7).
- b. If I don’t pray, it means: I’m disobedient to the Bible. The expectation is that a Christian will pray (Col. 4:2, 1 Thess. 5:17). Jesus says “*when* you pray” not “*if* you pray” (Matt. 6:5).
- c. If I don’t pray, it means: I’m living a life of unbelief. Are we praying “earnestly to the Lord of the harvest” (Luke 10:2)? Does our prayer life demonstrate our belief in God?

The second purpose of the parable is that we should not lose heart. We may struggle to pray with persistence, but we must wait on God.

2. The People of the Parable There are two people in this parable: an unrighteous judge and a lonely widow. We may see this parable as making a comparison between God and the judge and conclude that the message is to pester God until he gives in. But that’s not the right paradigm. Instead, we should see a contrast between God and the judge. If even an unrighteous judge will eventually give in and deliver justice, how much more will a righteous God be quick to answer your prayers?

3. The Promises of the Parable

First, the parable promises that we should keep praying because God will always do what is right. Who we believe God to be fuels our prayer life. He is righteous and will do what is right (1 John 5: 14-15).

Secondly, the parable promises that God hears the cries of his people. We pray because he listens, and he hears us differently than he hears unbelievers. God hears “his elect” as a parent hears the cries of his own children.

Thirdly, the parable promises that God’s timing is not our timing. We are not on God’s schedule. Sometimes, an unanswered prayer may be because the time has not yet come.

4. The Punchline of the Parable The question is not “will he come again?” but “will we be ready when he comes?” God has the authority to ask questions and demand answers, and the question “will he find faith on earth?” is not a matter of divine speculation. Rather, it is to prompt the follower of God to consider what God will find him doing. Are we living a life of dependence on God? When he comes, will he find you faithful?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the most frequent reason for prayerlessness in your life? How has God prompted you to restore your fellowship with him in prayer?
2. Why is it important to see the contrast between the judge and God?
3. Which promise of the parable are you most in need of remembering?