



## Unanswered Prayers

Luke 11:5-10

### RECAP

**This week's focus: God is working in your unanswered prayers.**

Why don't my prayers get answered? This is a common question for many. Jesus deals with this primary obstacle to praying by telling a story.

In Luke 11 and Luke 18, Jesus teaches us not only how to pray but that we pray with bold persistence. Perhaps the most consistent thing about our prayer life is that it's inconsistent. We often find ourselves praying when there's a pressing need or longing that is immediate. However, prayer is more than a laundry list presented to God in an emergency. Prayer is a conversation with your Heavenly Father. Prayer builds relationship with Him and aligns our will with His. Jesus encourages us to come to the Father in prayer with child-like abandon, boldness, and persistence.

The problem comes when our prayers are unanswered. We ask, we seek, we knock and there's silence. That silence leaves us questioning, "Why didn't God answer my prayers? Has He abandoned me? Where is He when I need Him?" Many times, we are quick to focus on the character of God rather than examine our own lives.

The Bible clearly shows us that there are some reasons God doesn't answer prayer. The clearest reason is unconfessed sin (Psalm 66:18, Proverbs 15:29). Scripture tells us when we are out of fellowship with God, He doesn't hear our prayers. James tells us that it can be because we ask with wrong motives as well as unbelief that hinders our prayers from being answered. Matthew says unresolved relational conflict is yet another reason God may not be answering your prayers.

Perhaps the hardest to admit is we just don't know why God doesn't answer some prayers. We do know that "His ways are not our ways" (Isaiah 55:8-9). When we are left perplexed by a prayer that we thought God would undoubtedly answer, we can trust that "His ways are higher" than our ways.

We can take heart that an unanswered prayer is at the core of the Gospel. God works in our unanswered prayers. As Jesus prayed in the garden, He asked to be spared the suffering He would endure. "Father, take this cup from me." Yet we see that His mission wasn't to be relieved from suffering but to remain in it so that we could be rescued. His unanswered prayer became the answer to our greatest need: our need for someone to pay the price for our sins and defeat death once and for all.

### 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting

- Fill out your prayer request and commit to fast and pray
- During the next 21 days join us Monday - Saturday from 7:00-7:30 AM in the Chapel for corporate prayer.
- Night of Prayer and Worship-January 29<sup>th</sup>



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### SHARE (5-10 min)

1. Icebreaker Question: If you could ask God for anything, what would it be? Why would you ask for this?

### STUDY (about 30 min) Read Luke 11:5-10

2. What was your main takeaway about prayer from the message on Sunday?
3. In Luke 11:5-10 what is Jesus teaching us about how we should pray?
4. Describe a time when God didn't answer a prayer of yours. What did you learn about God and what did you struggle with most?
5. Read Psalm 66:18. What is God trying to communicate to us about the relationship to sin and unanswered prayer?
6. Read Matthew 5:23-24. Why do you think Jesus highlights the need to reconcile relationships before coming to God in prayer?
7. Read James 4:3 and James 1:6-8. When it comes to prayer, what are some wrong motives? What does it look like to ask with right motives? How can unbelief hinder our prayers?
8. Ron said, sometimes God's answer is "No", "Slow", "Grow" or "Know". Which one of these is hardest for you to understand?
9. How do you see God working in your life through unanswered prayers? What is He teaching you about yourself and about His character?
10. What changes in your thinking do you need to make so you can better understand unanswered prayer?

### SUPPORT (15 min)

Break up into smaller groups or as one group pray the following together:

- Thank God for the prayers He has answered in your life. Take time to praise Him for all He has done.
- Ask God to help you restore those broken relationships that may be hindering your prayers.
- Ask God to help you check your motives to ensure they are the right ones when you pray.
- Ask God to help open your mind so you can have a better understanding of why He doesn't always answer prayer.
- Ask God to help you strengthen your faith in Him.