

## **Discipleship – Summer 2012 – Week beginning 9<sup>th</sup> July**

### **Home group / study notes: Prayer and the character of God**

*Feel free to use as much or as little as you wish. Don't rush the discussions in order to 'finish' the study, and make sure you allow time for prayer.*

Begin by sharing any examples of prayers which have been answered in the lives of group members, in the church or more widely.

Spend a few moments in **prayer** at the start this week, thanking God for any answers received, and remembering just the start of the Lord's prayer: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name'.

*When we think about prayer it is really important to remember that the main reason we ask God things is that he wants us to, and that somehow it seems to work! The exact 'mechanism' is in God's hands, but this parable may help us pray more easily.*

**Read** Luke 11:5-8 Does God expect us to keep pestering him, and then answers prayer reluctantly? What is your experience? If this were true, how would it make you feel about prayer? Why **do** we pray about the same things again and again? (Or do we? Should we?). Remember Paul in 2 Cor 12:7-8.

This is a good example of a case where some solid study of the passage gives vital understanding... so here goes. What does your translation have for Lk 11:8? Have a look at a few different ones. Why does the householder (eventually?) decide to get up?

There are two key words:

- (a) the one translated as persistence, keeping on, shamelessness, boldness (αναίδεια – 'anaideia')
- (b) 'his', as in **his** persistence, keeping on, shamelessness, boldness

To our (Western) ears the parable sounds like this: **'Suppose someone should go to a friend's house at midnight and ask for bread. Even though the householder will not get up and give the bread readily, nevertheless he will eventually give in because of his (ie the caller's) persistence in asking'**

However, the word referred to in (a) above could be translated as 'avoidance of shame', or 'out of honour'; and the word 'his' in (b) could refer to the householder...

Then we hear it as the Middle Eastern person might:

**'Even though it is inconvenient (the family are all asleep in the one-roomed house and would be woken) nevertheless the householder will get up and give even more than is asked because of his (ie the householder's) honour'**.

*We must remember that hospitality is a sacred duty for the whole community, and that arriving at midnight is not uncommon because of the heat of the day. It would have been unthinkable dishonourable not to aid someone entertaining a visitor.*

The caller knows the honourable character of the householder and has a relationship with him – they are in the same small community – but doesn't try any special technique to make him respond. Nor is there a special response because the caller was a particularly 'good' friend. Nor is it anything to do with persistence!

What does this now say about our approach to God, and his response to our prayers?

**Read** Lk 11:1-4 which immediately precedes the parable, and 11:9-13 which follows it.

What might this whole passage be telling us about the very basics of prayer? Do you think your individual or our corporate prayer life needs attention? If so, any new suggestions?

**Pray now** the next part of the Lord's prayer: 'Your kingdom come'. Rely on God's character, and boldly claim his presence for areas where you see a need for his kingdom to come – in yourself, in others, in the world.

**Extra questions to throw in if you run out of discussion...**

*Is the outcome of our prayer in any way affected by the way we pray?*

*If more people pray does that affect the outcome?*

*Are long times of prayer better than short ones?*

*What state of mind do you (the caller) need to be in?*

## ***Discipleship – Summer 2012 – Week beginning 9<sup>th</sup> July***

### **Home group / study notes: Prayer and the character of God**

*Feel free to use as much or as little as you wish. Don't rush the discussions in order to 'finish' the study, and make sure you allow time for prayer.*

Begin by sharing any examples of prayers which have been answered in the lives of group members, in the church or more widely.

Spend a few moments in **prayer** at the start this week, thanking God for any answers received, and remembering just the start of the Lord's prayer: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name'.

*When we think about prayer it is really important to remember that the main reason we ask God things is that he wants us to, and that somehow it seems to work! The exact 'mechanism' is in God's hands, but this parable may help us pray more easily.*

**Read** Luke 11:5-8 Does God expect us to keep pestering him, and then answers prayer reluctantly? What is your experience? If this were true, how would it make you feel about prayer? Why **do** we pray about the same things again and again? (Or do we? Should we?). Remember Paul in 2 Cor 12:7-8.

This is a good example of a case where some solid study of the passage gives vital understanding... so here goes. What does your translation have for Lk 11:8? Have a look at a few different ones. Why does the householder (eventually?) decide to get up?

There are two key words:

- (a) the one translated as persistence, keeping on, shamelessness, boldness (αναίδεια – 'anaideia')
- (b) 'his', as in **his** persistence, keeping on, shamelessness, boldness

To our (Western) ears the parable sounds like this: **'Suppose someone should go to a friend's house at midnight and ask for bread. Even though the householder will not get up and give the bread readily, nevertheless he will eventually give in because of his (ie the caller's) persistence in asking'**

However, the word referred to in (a) above could be translated as 'avoidance of shame', or 'out of honour'; and the word 'his' in (b) could refer to the householder...

Then we hear it as the Middle Eastern person might:

**'Even though it is inconvenient (the family are all asleep in the one-roomed house and would be woken) nevertheless the householder will get up and give even more than is asked because of his (ie the householder's) honour'**.

*We must remember that hospitality is a sacred duty for the whole community, and that arriving at midnight is not uncommon because of the heat of the day. It would have been unthinkable dishonourable not to aid someone entertaining a visitor.*

The caller knows the honourable character of the householder and has a relationship with him – they are in the same small community – but doesn't try any special technique to make him respond. Nor is there a special response because the caller was a particularly 'good' friend. Nor is it anything to do with persistence!

What does this now say about our approach to God, and his response to our prayers?

**Read** Lk 11:1-4 which immediately precedes the parable, and 11:9-13 which follows it.

What might this whole passage be telling us about the very basics of prayer? Do you think your individual or our corporate prayer life needs attention? If so, any new suggestions?

**Pray now** the next part of the Lord's prayer: 'Your kingdom come'. Rely on God's character, and boldly claim his presence for areas where you see a need for his kingdom to come – in yourself, in others, in the world.

**Extra questions to throw in if you run out of discussion...**

*Is the outcome of our prayer in any way affected by the way we pray?*

*If more people pray does that affect the outcome?*

*Are long times of prayer better than short ones?*

*What state of mind do you (the caller) need to be in?*

## ***Discipleship – Summer 2012 – Week beginning 9<sup>th</sup> July***

### **Home group / study notes: Prayer and the character of God**

*Feel free to use as much or as little as you wish. Don't rush the discussions in order to 'finish' the study, and make sure you allow time for prayer.*

Begin by sharing any examples of prayers which have been answered in the lives of group members, in the church or more widely.

Spend a few moments in **prayer** at the start this week, thanking God for any answers received, and remembering just the start of the Lord's prayer: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name'.

*When we think about prayer it is really important to remember that the main reason we ask God things is that he wants us to, and that somehow it seems to work! The exact 'mechanism' is in God's hands, but this parable may help us pray more easily.*

**Read** Luke 11:5-8 Does God expect us to keep pestering him, and then answers prayer reluctantly? What is your experience? If this were true, how would it make you feel about prayer? Why **do** we pray about the same things again and again? (Or do we? Should we?). Remember Paul in 2 Cor 12:7-8.

This is a good example of a case where some solid study of the passage gives vital understanding... so here goes. What does your translation have for Lk 11:8? Have a look at a few different ones. Why does the householder (eventually?) decide to get up?

There are two key words:

- (a) the one translated as persistence, keeping on, shamelessness, boldness (αναίδεια – 'anaideia')
- (b) 'his', as in **his** persistence, keeping on, shamelessness, boldness

To our (Western) ears the parable sounds like this: **'Suppose someone should go to a friend's house at midnight and ask for bread. Even though the householder will not get up and give the bread readily, nevertheless he will eventually give in because of his (ie the caller's) persistence in asking'**

However, the word referred to in (a) above could be translated as 'avoidance of shame', or 'out of honour'; and the word 'his' in (b) could refer to the householder...

Then we hear it as the Middle Eastern person might:

**'Even though it is inconvenient (the family are all asleep in the one-roomed house and would be woken) nevertheless the householder will get up and give even more than is asked because of his (ie the householder's) honour'**

*We must remember that hospitality is a sacred duty for the whole community, and that arriving at midnight is not uncommon because of the heat of the day. It would have been unthinkable dishonourable not to aid someone entertaining a visitor.*

The caller knows the honourable character of the householder and has a relationship with him – they are in the same small community – but doesn't try any special technique to make him respond. Nor is there a special response because the caller was a particularly 'good' friend. Nor is it anything to do with persistence!

What does this now say about our approach to God, and his response to our prayers?

**Read** Lk 11:1-4 which immediately precedes the parable, and 11:9-13 which follows it.

What might this whole passage be telling us about the very basics of prayer? Do you think your individual or our corporate prayer life needs attention? If so, any new suggestions?

**Pray now** the next part of the Lord's prayer: 'Your kingdom come'. Rely on God's character, and boldly claim his presence for areas where you see a need for his kingdom to come – in yourself, in others, in the world.

***Extra questions to throw in if you run out of discussion...***

*Is the outcome of our prayer in any way affected by the way we pray?*

*If more people pray does that affect the outcome?*

*Are long times of prayer better than short ones?*

*What state of mind do you (the caller) need to be in?*