

**Luke 11:1-13** Praying: 1. It's hard to pray 2. It's wonderful to pray

This is my experience – perhaps that was the case for the disciples – but at least they asked for teaching... *"Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."*

Why? Cultural opposition. In our society.

In politics, in this country, a believer is a vote loser.

It's hard to pray sometimes because we are aware of our doubts, and lack of faith. We can feel unworthy...

Those early disciples were like us, on a journey of faith, but Jesus says to them *"When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come... vs 2* He doesn't say – "it's not much good you praying – you are too full of doubt, you lack faith, you are going to let me down..." He is expecting them, and encouraging them and teaching...wanting them...

It's hard to pray – because we don't understand everything but we are not God! We won't know...

It's hard to pray if we have prayed and nothing seemed to change. That can be a problem of patience in our quick-fire, instant gratification world...we want it now! Or a problem of perseverance.

Jesus knows that. He addresses it in this story... *(I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. Vs 8)* saying be bold, persistent, unrelenting, audacious... ask, ask... It's hard...Not very polite or British.

And it is hard when we are not sure if God is good. Praying is hard when you feel you don't have the right words...Jesus gives some suggestions but they are not a magic formula.

Finally praying is hard because in the spiritual realm we have an enemy in Satan who hates us praying. He hates you praying because he knows how powerful, and effective and wonderful prayer is...

So prayer is hard, but it is also wonderful, and worthwhile, brilliant, excellent, fabulous and every other superlative.

Prayer is amazing. Why did the disciples want to know? – because when they saw Jesus pray – it was fantastic! They wanted a bit of that! Teach us!

Jesus is really keen that you pray. He wants you to experience what he experienced!

Jesus was talking with his heavenly father – the God of the universe – and he is saying you can too!

He says if you ask, and seek, and knock you can receive an amazing gift. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit. And the HS comes to live in you. Impartation.

That's where Christianity is different from every other religion. It is about what God does in you. he wants relationship.

The point of prayer is not to get something, or get something done, it is to get God. To invite him. To welcome him. To sit with him. Let him in.

It's hard to get out of the way! The ego, the thoughts and the distractions and the worries, and the resentments, and the other "important things".

Prayer is wonderful, because it is a taste of heaven. Heaven is about the presence of God. So you can start now, to experience heaven – eternal life.

Questions:

How is your prayer life!? What is good, what is not?

Can you identify with any of the reasons I said that prayer is hard? Which?

Do you have any more of your own?

"Prayer is wonderful". Describe when that has been true for you.

Talk about prayer without words. What experience do you have?

Give plenty of time to pray! But do try to listen. Say, "What are you saying to us?" And wait expectantly with the gentle challenge to people that they say what they hear, sense, imagine God saying. Do these things resonate with others in the group?