



**Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture**

**SERMON TEXT:** Matthew 7:7-11

**KEY POINT(S):** Active, persistent prayer is a priority for disciples of Christ, and gives us perspective of God’s Kingdom.

**FOR LEADERS**

- *Last Week of Communities...? – It is our final week of Communities....(Kind of) In true Emergence fashion, we have set our Communities season to end one week before the end of the sermon series...SO, have a conversation with your group this week and see if you’d like to finish this week, or carry on into next week for a final Bonus session. The resources will be prepared for you as usual. But, in either case, take some time to celebrate your community’s journey this season!!*
- *Communities Feedback! – As always, our hope at Emergence is that we would always be growing in our walks with Jesus, as well as in how we function together as a unified body! One way in which we continue to grow and continue to improve is from feedback and input from our leaders! Please take some time this week to fill out a feedback survey and let us know how we’re doing! The survey will be sent out to all Community Leaders this week via e-mail.*

**GETTING STARTED**

- [1] Icebreaker** – “Share one prayer request that you know, without a doubt, God answered in a clear way.”
- [2] Communities Video** - Watch this week’s Communities video!
- [3]** What were some things that stood out to you from the sermon this week? Was there anything you found particularly impactful or eye-opening?

**PRIMARY AND PERSISTENT PRAYER**

**Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 7:7-11**

In the sermon this week, Ryan said, “So many people go about their day in business and planning and never realize that the key to the locked doors in their life is right there in their pocket.” He went on to explain that prayer is the most powerful tool we have to face the obstacles in our lives and that praying with God should be primary in our lives.

- [1]** In your opinion, do you think that prayer is something valuable to most people today? Why or why not?
- [2]** Often, many folks who would never entertain a conversation about God or Jesus, might still be open to be prayed over. Why do you think this is, and what does that communicate about the world we live in today?
- [3]** What do you think might be gained by a life of consistent prayer?
- [4]** Ryan mentioned that our lives are quite often thrown off by obstacles and “closed doors.” In what ways would an active and persistent prayer life aid us in this?
- [5]** Where have you seen the power of prayer at work in your own life, and in what way(s) do you try to incorporate prayer in your daily life?

*Leaders: Prayer isn’t just a discipline or a practice – it’s an essential function of the human soul. What breathing oxygen is to the body prayer is to the soul. Perhaps even more important. As Christians, we have constant, immediate access to the Creator of the Universe, and yet how often does that line take a back seat to the mounting “needs” of our every lives? Perhaps it’s our priorities that are backwards.*



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PRAYING FOR PERSPECTIVE

A lot of times prayer can turn into a series of “asks and wants,” as if God is a kind of all-powerful genie. Ryan talked about how God answers prayer in numerous ways, and sometimes that answer is “no,” or “not yet.”

[6] In what way does our prayer life reveal our perspective of God and our relationship to Him? How might someone’s prayer life change over time as they become more and more mature in Christ?

There are countless examples of people throughout the Bible who walked with prayer as priority in their life. Perhaps the best example in Scripture is Jesus Himself, who constantly and consistently withdrew Himself (even from His disciples and closest friends) to spend time in prayer with God the Father.

[7] What are some examples of prayer from the Bible that you personally think on when it comes to prayer? How do those verses or passages teach you or encourage you in regard to prayer in your own life?

[8] Share a time in your life where God said “No” or “not yet” to something you prayed for in order to give you something better.

[9] Who is someone that you know who has a strong prayer life? What is it about them that you personally wish to emulate?

In the sermon this week, Ryan talked about the healthy balance of planning and prayer. He mentioned three verses in Proverbs (Proverbs 16:3, 21:5, 16:9) that teach us how to be discerning as we plan, but also to hold our loosely and to lay them before God to redirect us as He wills.

[10] Do you personally tend to be someone who plans “too much” or someone who “doesn’t plan at all?” How could you stand to be more faithful in your own planning?

[11] How do we practically balance the Bible’s push to plan well, and yet remain faithful to trust God to move, change and redirect us as He wills?

Leaders: Many folks don’t realize this, but there is a tell-tale sign of Christian maturity, and it’s when a person’s personal prayer life shifts from “God, help me to do this, or grant me that,” to “God, make me more like you as your will be done.” It is a subtle shift, but it reveals everything about our perspective of who God is, as well as our relationship to Him. While we should always bring our requests to God, because He is a loving Father who loves to bless His children, we should be careful that we don’t somehow try to turn God into our pet genie. The question to ask is simple – Who sits on the throne of your life? Is it really Jesus? Or is it you?

ACTIVE PRAYER

[12] Where in your life are you personally struggling to say, “God, not my will but Yours?”

[13] What areas of your own prayer life are you seeing fruit, and what is something you’re praying for right now?

PRAYER

[1] Give thanks to God that He loves us and cares for our prayers!! Also pray that God would shift our perspective to better see our lives through the lens of the Kingdom, and that being in prayer with Jesus would become the highest priority in our lives!

