

Dear Friend:

In Luke 11 (and Matthew 7) Jesus tells a story that must have provoked smiles and chuckles in his first century audience. A man opens his door to a neighbor asking for bread for an unexpected late-night guest. Culturally two things are an absolute: a guest must be invited to stay overnight AND to have something to eat. Keep in mind: it would be rude for the guest to ask for either. It would be unthinkable for the host not to offer both! Then as now, people of the countries of Asia (China, Thailand, Korea, etc.) and Africa see hospitality as nearly a matter of life and death!

Back to the story. The guy who had the neighbor at the door asking for bread said: "Don't bother me. The door is already locked and my children are with me in bed, and I can't get up and give you anything". Jesus' audience probably booed this guy like a Maury Povich guest: "You ARE the father". The neighbor asking for bread kept on knocking and kept on asking until the guy finally got up and gave him some bread. Jesus says the guy answered his neighbor's request because of his neighbors persistence - he kept on asking. The purpose of the story was to teach the audience (and us) that when it comes to prayer, we need to not easily give up but Ask, Seek, and Knock. As a matter of fact, Ask, Seek and Knock are written in the Greek verb tense that means: "Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking". It is interesting that the story of the persistent neighbor follows the Lord's Prayer in Luke 11. It's as if Jesus is saying: "Praying about something once is not enough". If a cranky neighbor, who wishes more than anything for the bread seeking neighbor to go away eventually gets up and gives his persistent neighbor the bread...how much more will God respond to our bold persistence in prayer! We should pray like a salesman with his foot wedged in the door opening, like a wrestler who has his opponent in a headlock and won't let go!

God views our persistence as a genuine gesture of faith and a desire for change. Persistent prayer is a path to spiritual growth. The real value in persistent prayer is not so much that we get what we want but that we become the person we should be. 19th Century theologian Soren Kierkegaard said: "Prayer does not change God, but it changes him who prays" So I say to you...keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking!

In Christ's Love,

*Pastor Mike*

Speaking of Prayer: Pat Twomey (cancer), Pastor Dan Kopp (cancer), Missy Dunaway (recovery from pneumonia, collapsed lung, etc.), Pearl Ward Family

Events: Potluck after church this Sunday, also...meeting during potluck for those who would like to know about the return of the Easter Egg project.