

THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT

“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.” —LUKE 11:9-10

One of Jesus' disciples asked Him, “Lord, teach us to pray.” He did not say, “Teach us how to pray.” In other words, give us some methods, techniques, and instructions. He said, “to pray”, and that is to connect with God, which has a much deeper meaning as it comes from the heart. Jesus first gives them an abbreviated version of the Lord’s Prayer, and then tells them the parable about the friend at midnight.

“Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.’ Then the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ 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” (Luke 11:5-8). Having told this story, Jesus said, “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” That leads us to wonder: Is God like the friend on whose door we have to keep knocking?

A parable can be either a comparison or a contrast to the message being taught. This is, of course, a contrast and the lesson Jesus is giving is that we don’t have to keep banging on the door to get God to respond. We

don't need any methods or techniques, but simply commune with God honestly and openly. He then says, "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:11-13).

The problem with many of us is that we feel God is somehow reluctant, and we've got to put the pressure on to get Him to respond. Jesus anticipates this because that's what many people do. The marvellous thing is, without the badgering, God hears our prayers, and if our praying seeks His will, then Jesus says, "Ask and it will be given to you, knock and the door will be opened."

PRAYER: Thank You, Lord, for hearing my prayers. May they always be in line with your will.

TO REFLECT UPON: In my prayers, do I tend to put the pressure on, thinking God hasn't heard me?