

ASKING, SEEKING, KNOCKING

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Reading: Luke 11:5-10

One of the things the Lord taught people while He was on earth was how to pray. One way He did this was to tell His disciples a parable about a man who wanted to borrow three loaves of bread. Through this parable the Lord taught that we should pray to Him as earnestly and persistently as the man in the story begged for bread.

The parable is about a man who was visited at midnight by a friend who was traveling. The visit was unexpected, so the man had no bread to give his friend. The traveler was hungry. His host would not let his friend go to bed without eating something. So he went to a neighbor whom he knew very well and knocked at his door. This neighbor and everyone in his house had gone to bed. He was a selfish man. He did not want to get up, go down the stairs, and find some bread. He just shouted down, "Do not trouble me...I cannot rise and give to you" (Luke 11:7).

Did the man outside give up and go back to his guest without any bread? No! He kept on knocking and asking until the selfish man got up, grumbling, and gave him three loaves of bread to get rid of him. The selfish man did not give the bread in a friendly spirit or because he loved the other man as a friend. He gave it in anger, to get rid of the person who was bothering him.

Now, what does this story have to do with praying to the Lord? Well, through it the Lord taught His disciples that if a selfish person will give bread to someone who keeps on asking, then certainly the loving, Heavenly Father will answer our prayers. He will answer all those who pray earnestly, really meaning what they are saying, and He will give them good things. But we must concentrate when we pray to the Lord and not focus on something that has nothing to do with worshiping Him.

The Lord knows what things we need before we ask Him for them. He knows all things. So why does He want us to pray to Him and ask Him for things? It is because *we* need to think carefully about what we want in order to be sure that it is something we should ask of the Lord. And we need to learn to want only good things. We learn these things when we think hard about the things we pray for.

So when you say the Lord's Prayer, try not to just mumble it or think about other things. Try hard to think about the Lord and ask Him to help you do only what is right and good.

Prayer is asking, seeking and knocking, and the Lord promises that "everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (Luke 11:10).

Amen.