

Small Group Guide

WHY PRAY? TO ACCESS POWER

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. Jim Shaddix

November 25, 2012

Luke 11:1-13

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to train your group into potential disciple-makers and lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word with His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Welcome—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. (The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time.) Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to review the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications for our lives. (As a training tool, leaders might want to have various members summarize the teachings in their own words each week sharing how they think the Scripture applied to the original hearers and how the principles apply to us today.)

Message Outline

TO ACCESS POWER

Luke 11:1-13

Prayer is the trigger by which we engage the effects and influences of the Holy Spirit.
(Luke 11:1,13; cf. John 14:13-14,16; 15:7,16; 16:23-24,26)

What Jesus wants us to pray for

Pray for things in view of God's sovereignty and that have bearing on His kingdom.
(Luke 11:1-4; cf. Job 42:2; Psalm 33:11; Proverbs 19:21; Isaiah 14:24; 46:8-11; Acts 1:7)

- Pray for God to be worshiped.
(Luke 11:2; cf. Matthew 6:9)
- Pray for the completion of God's reign.
(Luke 11:2; cf. Matthew 6:10; Philippians 2:9-11)
- Pray for God's provision of basic needs.
(Luke 11:3; cf. Proverbs 30:7-9; Matthew 6:19-33)

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- Pray for God's 'practical' forgiveness. (Luke 11:4; cf. Matthew 6:12,14-15)
- Pray for God's help to remain faithful. (Luke 11:4; cf. Matthew 6:13)

How Jesus wants us to pray

Be annoyingly relentless in view of God's character.

(Luke 11:8; cf. Nehemiah 1:4-11; Psalm 5:1-2; 17:1; 27:7; 55:1; 102:1-2; 143:1; Acts 4:23-31)

- God values your communion over your convenience. (Luke 11:9-13)
- God promises to answer, not patronize your aggressiveness. (Luke 11:9-10; cf. Jeremiah 33:3. Matthew 7:7-8; 21:22. Mark 11:24)
- God is awake and available 24/7. (Luke 11:9-10; cf. Esther 4:11; Psalm 121:4; Hebrews 4:14-16)
- God invites you into His process, not just His provision. (Luke 11:9-10)
- God is your Heavenly Father, not your worldly friend. (Luke 11:11-13; cf. Psalm 84:11; Jeremiah 29:11-13; Romans 8:12-30; Galatians 4:4-7)
- God is interested in both your spiritual and material needs. (Luke 11:11-13)
- God gives you Himself, not just His resources. (Luke 11:13; cf. Matthew 7:11; Ephesians 3:20-21)

Message Summary

Luke 11 demonstrates that prayer is the means through which we access the power God has provided for us through the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life and to carry out His mission. In Luke 11, Jesus teaches His followers what to pray and how to pray. The Lord's Prayer guides believers to pray with an understanding of God's sovereignty for God to be worshiped, for the completion of His reign, for His provision of basic needs, for forgiveness for sin, and for His help to remain faithful. With the parable in Luke 11, Jesus instructs believers to pray boldly and persistently in light of God's character. Unlike the sleeping neighbor in the parable, God eagerly desires to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask of Him (v. 13). He answers the prayers of His children with His best – Himself, for prayer triggers the very life of God in our lives. This passage demonstrates that the character of God should marshal great confidence in our prayer lives and spur us on to pray aggressively and persistently to our Heavenly Father.

Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- Describe this power that we should be praying to access.
- If God has truly put His Holy Spirit inside of you, why do you not experience His power in your daily Christian life more than you do? How is your life lacking the Spirit's power? This week, how do you make sure that you put into motion the work the Holy Spirit intends to do in your life?
- What word(s) or phrase(s) characterize the regular content of your prayers? What does your prayer life express about your relationship with God? How can you intentionally grow in your prayer life this week?

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- How is prayer the trigger by which we engage the effects and influences of the Holy Spirit? How should this statement affect your fervency and the amount of time you spend communicating with God?
- Read John 14:13-14, 16; 15:7, 16; 16:23-24, 26. What does Jesus teach about prayer in these verses?
- The Lord's Prayer assumes the sovereignty of God. What does it mean for God to be sovereign? How do your prayers reflect an understanding of God's sovereignty? Why should our prayers rely upon this attribute of God?
- How do your prayers differ with how Jesus taught His followers to pray? How do your prayers align with the content of the Lord's Prayer? If our prayers commonly neglect the contents of the Lord's Prayer, what does this indicate about us, our view of God, and our dependence on ourselves?
- For God's name to be "hallowed" (Lk. 11:2) means that it is to be set apart and glorified. How does the content of your prayers worship God? Why should we pray for God to be glorified?
- What are personal and global implications for praying for the completion of God's reign? In what ways are you joining God on mission? Why should we as Christ-followers be looking forward to the consummation of God's Kingdom? If you are not desirous of His return, why?
- Luke 11:3 instructs us to pray for God's provision for our needs. Read Proverbs 30:9-10. What truths can be gleaned from this passage? Discuss how these two passages should inform our prayers?
- How does praying for God's forgiveness as instructed in the Lord's Prayer differ from a prayer of salvation? How often do your prayers contain confession? If confession is not a regular part of your conversations with God, why? Why is regular confession important for the believer?
- What connections exist between our prayers for God's forgiveness and our forgiveness of others?
- In what areas of life do you struggle with remaining faithful to God? How diligent are you in praying for God to keep you from yielding to temptation and to help you be faithful? What guardrails can you set this week to help guard yourself against temptation?
- Read Luke 11:13. Discuss the meaning of the word "Impudence" (v. 8). How does this word inform our prayers? Why are we instructed to pray persistently? Why types of things do you or should you pray for with annoying relentlessness?
- Read Psalm 5:1-2; 17:1; 27:7; 55:1; 102:1-2; 143:1-2. In these passages, how is the psalmist being "overly bold" in his prayers?
- Read Luke 11:9-10. How is this invitation by God *not* manipulating Him or treating Him like Santa Claus? Does God always answer prayer? Describe reasons for why He would not give us what we persistently petition Him for.
- What is the intent of the parable in Luke 11:5-13? What mistakes are commonly made in interpreting this parable? What does this passage express about God's character?

Respond . . .

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of today's study. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from this study?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from this study, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this study?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?
- What is going to be the most difficult aspect of this study to personally apply?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength to apply these truths, for personal needs, for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel, and for our weekly prayer focus as a church..

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Weekly Prayer Focus ... (from our worship guide)

- *Church: As we grow in prayer as a church, pray that God will work through us in our community and around the world, especially through our prayers. Pray that God would make us people totally dependent on prayer. May we see that the effectual work of God's Spirit in believers is dependent on relentless, worship-based prayers as demonstrated in Luke chapter 11.*
- *Local: This week we are praying for the ministry of The Lovelady Center, a transitional housing ministry for women who are recovering from abuse, addictions, incarceration, and life pain. It is the largest facility of its type in the country and is located in the East Lake area of Birmingham. It currently houses approximately 400+/- women and children. We are also praying for Pastor Matthew Roskam, Chelsea Creek Community Church.*
- *Global: We are praying this week for Brook Hills Long-Term Missionaries, the Coe family. Bob and Ann Coe are members of Brook Hills and serve with their three children outside of Quito, Ecuador. The Coes partner with the Brocks serving at The Davis Foundation, an orphanage for 120 children. The Coes are helping to develop a multi-purpose site to facilitate disciple-making and training for local churches and outside groups in the area. Follow the Coes by visiting their blog, coesinecuador.blogspot.com.*