**SERMON OUTLINE**

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| **SERMON TITLE:** | When Parents Pray |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | Matthew 7:7-11 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #2225 |
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1. INTRODUCTION
   1. Children are a great incentive to prayer.
   2. Nothing will put you on your knees in prayer like having children.
   3. Our Lord taught about prayer in Matthew 7:7-11.
   4. Three key words in the passage: ask, seek, and knock. (all in verse seven)
      1. Matthew 7:7
      2. These are three little words, but a big door can swing on little hinges and open up into a vast room where there are multiplied treasures.
      3. This is Jesus speaking, and this is a rock-ribbed, iron-clad promise from the Word of God that is true.
      4. And these three things will teach us about how to get our prayers answered.
2. when we ask, desire is expressed
   1. When we’re asking, there’re things that we want, we desire.
   2. The greatest problem we face is not unanswered prayer; it is unoffered prayer.
      1. James 4:1-2
      2. The reason we can’t get along with one another is we just can’t get along with ourselves.
      3. We have not because we ask not.
      4. God alone knows how many blessings we could have had, had we only asked.
   3. Unoffered prayer is not only a tragedy, it is a sin.
      1. Our Lord has commanded us to ask, to pray.
         1. Luke 18:1
         2. Mark 14:38
         3. Philippians 4:6
   4. There are some things you can get a substitute for, but there is no substitute for prayer: not enthusiasm, not intellect, not energy, not ingenuity.
   5. Prayerlessness is the reason for the spiritual poverty and powerlessness of some Christians.
   6. Why does God want us to ask when He already knows what things we have need of?
      1. Matthew 6:7-8
         1. We do not pray in order to impress God.
         2. We do not pray in order to inform God. God already knows what we need.
         3. We pray to invite God. God wants us to ask Him.
   7. Three reasons we need to learn to ask God:
      1. The fellowship factor
         1. Prayer is a way of having fellowship with God. It is working with God.
            1. 2 Corinthians 6: 1
            2. God could do it without me, but He loves me too much to leave me out.
      2. The development factor
         1. We grow when we pray.
         2. God wants me to grow, and prayer helps me to grow.
            1. John 15:7
            2. God wants me to abide in and receive strength from Him to help me grow.
         3. The original Greek form of these words is in the present tense, which means: “Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking,” because that’s when we grow, when we keep on doing these things.
         4. When we ask for something and God doesn’t give it right away, we examine our hearts a little more, wondering why God did not answer.
      3. The dependency factor
         1. Prayer is also God’s way of causing us to be dependent upon Him.
            1. If God just gave us what we needed without our asking, we would cease to be dependent upon Him.
            2. It’s a way of binding us to Him.
   8. Asking God for what we need should be just as natural as breathing.
      1. A good test of whether you have any right to want anything is this: can you ask God for it?
         1. If you cannot ask God for it then you have no right to want it.
         2. Don’t get the idea you just ask God for the spiritual things, and you take care of the secular things.
         3. Jesus did not separate His life into the secular and the sacred.
            1. Everything is important to God.
         4. Nothing is beyond God or too small for God to deal with.
         5. You can pray about everything.
            1. You can even pray about it if you desire something you know He would not want for you: Tell Him, “God, I want something You don’t want. Fix my want-er.”
            2. Philippians 4:6
   9. The devil cannot keep God from answering, so what he will endeavor to do is to keep you from asking.
   10. If you have asked and have not received, He’s not finished yet. Read the whole verse.
3. when we seek, direction is explored
   1. Sometimes we don’t know what to ask for.
   2. Sometimes we’re asking for the wrong things.
      1. We must seek direction in our prayers.
      2. Asking is always linked with seeking.
   3. The idea of seeking is that there’s something that’s lost and we need to find it, or there’s something unknown and we need to understand it.
   4. What is it that we seek when we pray?
      1. We may be seeking the purpose of God.
         1. James. 4:2-3
            1. God is not going to give you the wrong thing, no matter how many times you ask Him.
            2. We can ask for personal needs, but we cannot ask for selfish needs.

God’s not just some glorified bellhop meant to do our bidding. Our asking is linked to seeking to find the will of God about a matter.

* + 1. We may be seeking the presence of God.
       1. James 4:8-9
    2. We may be seeking the power of God.
       1. James 5:16
  1. Prayer is not bending God’s will to fit our will; prayer is finding the will of God and getting in on it. That is why we must seek God’s purpose, His presence and His power in prayer.

1. when we knock, determiation is exerted
   1. More than just saying, “Lord, here’s what I want,” or “Lord, show me Your way.” This is imploring for God to open a door.
      1. This is in the present tense; it is knocking and keeping on knocking.
      2. There may be closed doors and barriers, but you keep knocking.
      3. Prayer is a battle, and we are up against the devil and all the minions of Hell, so we must keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking.
   2. There are different ways in which prayers are answered.
      1. Sometimes answers are direct. You just ask God for something and He gives it to you immediately, and it is unmistakably the hand of God.
      2. Sometimes the answer is different. He doesn’t give us what we ask; He gives us something better than we’ve asked.
         1. Ask in the right spirit, in His will.
            1. Romans 8:26
      3. Sometimes the answer is denied. He just says “No,” because what you’re asking for is wrong.
         1. James 4:3
         2. God is not going to give you something that will harm you or hurt you.
      4. Sometimes the answer is delayed. That’s the reason the Bible says for us to keep on knocking, keep on knocking, keep on knocking: Don’t quit praying.
         1. The Bible teaches that we are to continue in prayer.
            1. Luke 11: 5-8
            2. Luke 18:1-8
         2. Delays are not denials. Ask, seek, knock; keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking.
         3. I Kings 18:41-46
   3. When should you stop asking, seeking, knocking in a particular matter?
      1. When you have what you asked for.
      2. When, though you don’t have the answer in your hand, you have it in your heart.
      3. When God says, “No.”
         1. 2 Corinthians 12:7-9
   4. Why do we have the assurance of answered prayer?
      1. Matthew 7:9-11
      2. Because God is good.
         1. As people, we are not good; we make mistakes. Yet we love our children, imperfect as we are. God is good all the time.
         2. Matthew 7:11
      3. Because God is wise.
         1. God knows what we need.
         2. Psalm 84:11
         3. He is too wise to make a mistake and too good to be cruel.
      4. Because God is able.
         1. Matthew 6:9-10, 13(b)
         2. When we pray, we have a Father who will hear us and a King who can answer us.
         3. When we pray, we have the sympathy of a Father, and the sovereignty of a King.
            1. Matthew 7:11(b)
2. CONCLUSION
   1. No one should ever try to be a mother or father who doesn’t know how to pray.
   2. When we ask, that is desire.
   3. When we seek, that is direction.
   4. When we knock, that is determination.
   5. God will hear your prayer if you’ll learn how to pray as Jesus teaches us to pray. And if He doesn’t give you what you ask, He’ll give you something better than you asked.
   6. But all prayer must be in the name of Jesus to have Heaven’s authority. And you cannot pray in the name of Jesus without having Christ in your heart as your Lord and your Savior.
   7. Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
   8. Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. Acts 16:31
      5. John 3:16