

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost 27-07-2025
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

Hosea 1: 2-10	Hosea's wife and children
Psalms 85	A plea for restoration to God
Colossians 2: 6-15	Freedom from human rules, by relying on Jesus only, and him crucified.
Luke 11: 1-13	Jesus teaches the Lord's prayer, persistence in prayer and that God loves you and will answer your prayer

Introduction

In today's Gospel reading we hear Jesus teaching his disciples about prayer. It's in response to one of the disciples asking Jesus,

"Lord, teach us how to pray, as John taught his disciples."

We can see from this exchange that prayer was not an optional extra for those first followers of Jesus, but rather prayer was an integral part of who they were as followers of Jesus.

So today, let us look at 3 aspects, that Jesus teaches us about prayer?

- The Lord's prayer
- Persistence in prayer
- God loves you and will answer prayer

What is Prayer?

But before we begin I'd like to take a step back and first ask the question, "What is Prayer?"

Do you have friends? Do you have people you know and interact with? How do you know them? Primarily you know them by talking to them.

And just like we can talk with others to get to know them, Prayer is the way we can talk to God. Now clearly talking to another human being and talking to God is different, but the concept is similar. Just as we get to know family and friends by talking with them, we can develop our relationship with God through prayer.

As good communication involves listening and speaking, so does prayer. And just as being open and honest is important in human relationships it is important as we pray to God.

I recall some wonderful advice for pray, keep it "Simple", keep it "Honest" and keep it "Going".

Let us now delve into the Gospel reading.

The Lord's Prayer - Luke 11:1-4

The first bit of advice from Jesus on prayer is the Lord's Prayer. It is a way of praying that followers of Jesus have been using for 2000 years. Let us explore the words from Luke's gospel:-

"Father, hallowed be your name."

We begin by "hallowing God's name". You might be wondering, what does that even mean? It's not in language we really use today. It means we acknowledge God as the ultimate reality in our lives. God is our creator. We can only discover who we are really meant to be, when we acknowledge the God who created us, and with whom we are made to live in relationship with.

"Your Kingdom come."

This is about saying that we want things to be the way God wants them to be. God's kingdom means God's rule, so in this we are saying we want our lives and the relationships we have, and the world around us, to be the way God would like it to be.

"Give us each day our daily bread."

This is about asking God for the things we need in our lives. If we know we are God's children, and we are seeking to live God's ways, then it is of course natural to ask God to give us the things we need, so that we can carry out the plans God has for our lives.

"And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us."

Asking God for forgiveness is central to the Christian Faith. We are all sinners in need of a Saviour. In Jesus, God provides the way to forgiveness, but it is a part of our lives, that we continually need to bring before God. And in doing so, we are reminded that we too, need to forgive others. If we withhold forgiveness towards others, we can end up denying it for ourselves.

"And do not bring us to the time of trial."

In these words, we are asking God to keep us away from the things that would harm us. We are asking God to protect us, and to help us to be safe.

The Lord's prayer is multifaceted. It is wonderful for us to recite it day by day, so that the words seep into who we are. And it can be even more helpful when we reflect deeply on each aspect of it and relate it to our daily lives.

I had the privilege this week of praying with an elderly English lady in palliative care at Raffles. She was able to recite the 1662 version of the Lord's Prayer with me, and it seemed to really lift her spirits. She was so grateful for being able to pray with someone. And the wonderful thing was that she had the words to do it.

Persistence in Prayer Luke 11:5-8

After teaching his disciples the Lord's Prayer, Jesus tells them a story of persistence. A man wanting bread for visitors, a neighbour in bed in the middle of the night, and a persistence, which wins out in the end.

I believe this story is not trying to tell us that God will give us whatever we want as long as we keep asking, but rather that we should continue to pray.

God always answers our prayers. Sometimes the answer is "YES". Sometimes the answer is "NO". And sometimes the answer is "WAIT".

When we continue to come to God in prayer, it is not that God always gives us exactly what we ask for, but rather that we are molding ourselves to God's will and becoming closer and closer to God. And the closer we come to God, the more in tune we will be with God's will and not our own will.

Answer to Prayer Luke 11:9-13

In the final portion of scripture from today's gospel reading, Jesus teaches us to pray because God loves us, and God wants the best for us.

It begins with, "Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you."

And concludes with, "how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

We should pray to God, knowing that God hears our prayers, and expecting that God will answer our prayers.

Sometimes prayer will not change the circumstances in which we find ourselves. We should be comforted though that God hears our prayers, and that through our prayers God will change us. The more we intentionally set aside time for prayer, the more the Holy Spirit comes into our lives and draws us closer into the heart of God. And it is by the presence of the Holy Spirit that we are enabled to share God's love with those around us.

Conclusion

As we were preparing to move here to Tweed Heads, we spent some time relaxing in a place named Bowen, where we walked the beach and prayed for the people we would meet. I prayed that we would be enabled to help people come to know Jesus, and that those who had already accepted Jesus, would be enabled to grow in their faith. I collected shells to share, as a sign that we had prayed for you, but I did not hand them out. So today, I would like to ask you to take a shell, as a sign that you have been prayed for, that you will be prayed for, and that you are loved by God. I pray that you will continue to pray for one another, and to work together and love one another, so that the "Body of Christ" will continue to be built up here at St Cuthberts. Amen.