**1. Motivate**

When have you found it pays to be persistent?

* going on a diet or an exercise regimen
* faithfulness in study and class attendance in an academic setting
* working hard at a sports skill
* tending your garden and eventually reaping the benefits
* practicing a musical instrument
* trying and improving a recipe until you get it right

**2. Transition**

Prayer is something in which we can and should persevere

* Jesus taught us to persevere in prayer.
* Faith looks to God to provide what we need.

**3. Bible Study**

A video introduction is available for the lesson. View it at <http://tinyurl.com/2u5a3jax> If you have no wi-fi where you teach, it is best to download the video file to your computer from <http://tinyurl.com/bdfn8fu6>

3.1 Instructions for Praying Faith

Listen for elements of a prayer.

Luke 11:1-4 (NIV) One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: "'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

Why did the disciples need to be taught how to pray?

* they know that John the Baptist had taught his disciples about prayer
* maybe they had left the practice of prayer to rabbis and priests
* they saw Jesus often go off by Himself to pray

Why do we need to learn how to pray?

* as children all we learned was “Now I lay me down to sleep …”
* the only thing more we saw at home was prayer before meals
* we only saw the pastor praying in a church service
* maybe we never learned or were taught how to have a daily personal time of prayer
* examples of what we saw or heard were limited to certain kinds of prayer

Note, Jesus was praying “in a certain place.” How important is the place where we pray?

* can be anywhere
* serious prayer should be without distraction, good to have a quiet place
* could be when you are otherwise on “autopilot” – driving, while mowing the lawn, while waiting in a grocery line

What specific elements should be in our prayers, according to the passage? Note that this is the direct answer to the disciples original question.

* pray that God the Father’s name be hallowed (sacred, holy sanctified, honored)
* pray that God’s kingdom/rule come to pass – in people’s hearts, in world and local and family events
* pray for daily needs (food, finances, strength, wisdom, courage, patience, etc. – all of these might be considered “daily bread”)
* pray for forgiveness
* pray to be able to forgive others
* pray for protection in tempting situations

What are some good ways to prepare for personal prayer time?

* in some situations, you need no preparation … just talk to God
* other times you might read a psalm
* use a devotional guide
* sing a hymn or listen to Christian music

Evaluate *what kinds of concerns* occupy most of *your* prayer time …

* praise
* confession
* petition
* “organ recital” (list of physical needs – heart, gall bladder, bad knees …)
* spiritual needs (personal, family, church)

You might ask yourself … “Does this fit the pattern Jesus is outlining here?”

It occurs to me that we voice far more prayer requests for physical needs than for spiritual. I suspect that the spiritual issues are much more significant in our lives. However, we are more reluctant to admit to spiritual struggles than to physical imperfections. There is no shame in admitting to having the flu or a coming medical procedure, but we are not so eager to admit failures or addictions to unhealthy entertainment or to substance abuse of any sort.

As a personal aside …



(I now step
down from my
soapbox.)

3.2 Keep On Praying with Faith

Listen for an example of persistence.

Luke 11:5-10 (NIV) Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, 6 because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' 7 "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.' 8 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. 9 "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. 10 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Why was the man persistent in this passage?

* his need was desperate (he had to feed his late arriving guests)
* he knew his neighbor well enough to impose on him
* he knew his neighbor would have what he needed
* he knew if he asked long enough, the neighbor would relent

Note the parallels between this man’s persistence and why we should be persistent

* our needs are often desperate
* we know that God wants us to come to Him
* we know that God has what we kneed

Note the *contrast* between God and the neighbor …

⇨ The man was *reluctant* but gave in

⇨ God *wants* us to come to Him with our needs – He *wants* our trust

What kinds of things keep us from being persistent in our prayers?

* we forget
* we don’t take the time
* we are not disciplined
* we get discouraged, we get weary of asking
* we feel like the noisy neighbor asking for bread
* if we are praying for weeks, months, even years we wonder if God will ever answer
* in some situations we don’t even have to be concerned if it is really God’s will
* if it is praying for someone’s salvation or spiritual victory it surely IS God’s will

Consider the promise attached to the exhortation to ask, seek, and knock.

* Remember that Hebrew writing and oration often use repeated statements
* Note the parallel and contrasting statements in the Psalms (see Psalm 119)
* The repetition emphasized the *perseverance* Jesus was stressing
* *Keep* asking, *keep* seeking, *keep* knocking – *keep*  TRUSTING

What kinds of strategies might we have to develop persistence in prayer?

* keep a prayer journal – note the date of the initial request, then the date of the answer
* then as you go through the prayer journal, you can thank and praise God for the answer
* have a prayer partner, an accountability partner
* post a verse with a prayer request on a mirror, on the refrigerator, in your car
* participate in your church’s 24 hour-a-day intercessory prayer ministry

3.3 Accept the Answer with Faith

What kinds of gifts have people given that appeared to be good but turned out to bring harm to the recipient?

* a fast and fancy car for a reckless teen
* a gift of money meant for college that got squandered on a vacation
* a set of golf clubs that ended up becoming an obsession for the golfer
* a new computer that introduced the user to internet porn

Listen for examples of good and bad gifts.

Luke 11:11-13 (NIV) "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 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!"

Note the requests of the son and what is *not* given by the father?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Request from son | Not given by the father. |
| * fish
* egg
 | * snake
* scorpion
 |

What descriptive words or phrases are given about human fathers?

* basically we are evil
* even so we know how to give good gifts to our children

How is this contrasted with God?

* God is good, holy, righteous
* He will know how and want to give even better gifts to His children
* as an example, He has given us His own personal presence in the person of the Holy Spirit
* God will *not* give us harmful or untimely gifts or answers to our prayers
* God has some different lessons for us to learn while we persevere in prayer
* God’s timing is better than ours … our requests are better answered in a different sequence, with different timing

How might consistently praying with God’s goodness in mind impact a believers’ faith?

* increases our faith
* we become more and more convinced that God is able and willing to work in our lives
* we know that God is powerful and sovereign – He does as He pleases to do
* we become persuaded and confident that He is pleased to minister to us and meet our various needs
* we realize He is interested in all aspects of our lives and wants to bless, enable, protect, and provide

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Meditate.

* Pick a psalm and use it as a guide to worship God.
* Allow a phrase from the psalm to carry you through the week ahead.

Write.

* Pen a prayer card to a friend.
* Let that person know that you are praying and share with them a specific prayer that you are praying.

Practice.

* In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked his disciples, “Couldn’t you stay awake with me one hour?”
* Consider taking time one day this week and pray for one hour.
* Map out a plan and strategy for that hour that will guide the time.
* With a plan, you’ll be amazed how quickly the hour will pass.



Floating Phrases

This is really weird! Looks like an alien from the planet Kepler 16b came along and zapped a bunch of the letters with anti-gravity particles on the billboard and they floated straight up. We need you to figure out which letters go in the open spaces. Look for the single letter columns, then go for the two or three letter words and determine which letters make reasonable words. Report your results to the technology personnel of your church. If you need help or would rather do the crossword, go to <http://tinyurl.com/bdfn8fu6>

