



August 24, 2025

Kevin Sneed

Matthew 7:7-11

Introduction

This week's message explores the heart of prayer and what it means to persistently seek God even when our prayers seem unanswered. Kevin Sneed shares how prayer can feel like something we "ought to do" rather than "want to do," yet challenges us to understand Jesus' invitation to "ask, seek, knock" as a journey that deepens our relationship with God. Through examining both simple answered prayers (like parking spots) and profound unanswered ones (like Jesus' prayer for church unity), we discover that our prayers are treasured by God and that persistence in prayer is not about wearing God down but about trusting His perfect timing and eternal perspective.

Key Texts: Matthew 7:7-11; Luke 18:1-8; Rev. 3:20; Revelation 5:6; Psalm 126:5-6

Icebreaker

Share about a time when you received an unexpected answer to prayer—whether big or small. What surprised you about God's response?

Discussion Questions

1. Kevin mentioned that growing up, prayer felt like something he "ought to do" rather than "wanted to do." How would you describe your relationship with prayer? What makes prayer feel natural versus obligatory for you?
2. **Read Matthew 7:7-11 together as a group.** Kevin explained that "ask, seek, knock" represents a journey in prayer—from simple requests to searching for truth/relationship to intimate fellowship with God. Where do you find yourself most often in this progression? Which feels most challenging?

3. Jesus uses humor in verses 9-11, comparing earthly fathers to our heavenly Father. How does viewing God as a loving parent (rather than a distant judge) change your approach to prayer? What barriers do you have to seeing God this way?
4. **Read Luke 18:1-8 together.** The persistent widow keeps asking for justice from an unjust judge. Kevin emphasized we're not wearing God down—He's not the unjust judge. What's the difference between persistent prayer and nagging? How do you wrestle with continuing to pray when answers seem delayed?
5. Kevin shared examples of Jesus' own unanswered prayers—the cup not being taken from Him and His prayer for church unity. How does knowing that Jesus experienced unanswered prayer affect your view of your own unanswered prayers?
6. **Read Revelation 5:6 together.** The image shows our prayers as "golden bowls full of incense" treasured by God. Kevin said our prayers haven't been forgotten but will receive "one great resounding yes" in God's timing. How does this eternal perspective change how you view current unanswered prayers?
7. Eugene Peterson's quote reminds us to "keep praying, don't quit." What's one area where you've been tempted to stop praying? How can your Community Group support you in persistence without giving up hope?

Key Takeaways

- Prayer is a journey from asking to seeking to intimate fellowship with God
- Persistent prayer isn't about wearing God down but trusting His perfect timing
- Jesus himself experienced unanswered prayer, showing us we're not alone in waiting
- Our prayers are treasured by God like precious incense, never forgotten
- Unanswered prayer can narrow our focus, but God sees the broader eternal story
- There will be "one great resounding yes" when all things are made right

Notes