ASK

Prayer Series Overview:
- Talk to God (Luke 18:1-8)
- The Model Prayer (Luke 11:1-13)
- Praying in Weakness (Romans 8:9-30)
- Praying with Confidence (Hebrews 4:14-16, 10:19-22)
- Just Pray (A full night of praying together)
- Helping One Another Pray (D-group rhythm)

Introduction: Luke 18:1-8

What is the most consistent aspect of your prayer life? Sometimes the most consistent thing about how we pray is our inconsistency. This year the Summit will have a year-long emphasis on prayer. Over the next several months, Summit small groups will be studying and practicing prayer. There will be specific tools, environments, sermons, and studies to help everyone at the Summit grow as a disciple in the way they pray.

This week's main point:
Jesus calls believers to persist in prayer, not as a means of convincing God to act
but as a means of deepening our trust in Christ.

This week will focus on one of four passages we will use over the next few months to grow deeper in our understanding of prayer. Luke 18:1-8 brings up the concepts of justice and the desire for vindication from God. Both of these give our study an eschatological (or "last things") context. Or, as it relates to learning about prayer, we should start praying with the end in mind. The most difficult concept this passage will bring up in your group is how the Lord's timetable seems frustratingly slow when measured by impatient humans. This is why Jesus told this parable.

As you will get to in the study below, Luke 18:1-8 should be understood along with the preceding verses in Luke 17:20-37. This parable is not simply about how we should pray but relates directly to prayers for the Lord to come and set all things right. Jesus knew Christians would become disheartened in the midst of affliction before his return. As impatient humans, we dislike delay and expect God to be more punctual in meeting our needs. But by growing weary in prayer—and faith—we are actually "un-preparing" ourselves for the day when the Son of Man returns. This parable shows how a defenseless widow cast all her hope on a judge for deliverance from her crisis. Believers must see themselves both as weak and desperate for God in order to pray persistently. Prayer is our antidote to the spiritual toxin of unbelief.

Sermon Response Question:
1) What was your main takeaway about prayer from the sermon this weekend?

Read Luke 18:1-8.

Bible Study Questions:
2) Re-read Luke 18:1-8 to yourself. How would you break these eight verses down into three sections?

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3) In order to gain some context for our passage, look back and read Luke 17:20-37. As a group, take three minutes and make any observations you have about how this passage gives context to Luke 18:1-8.

4) The judge in verse Luke 18:2 is the antithesis of what a judge in Israel should have been (see 2 Chronicles 19:6-7). In those days, a judge was typically someone of high social station and therefore called upon to judge the cases of others; this judge forgot his purpose before God and trusted in his high station. How are you tempted to forget God's purpose for your life and trust in what God has given you instead of trusting in him?

5) Jesus told this parable so that his audience would learn to pray and not lose heart. How does the widow's persistence relate to not losing heart?

6) What is shocking about the judge's final decision considering his character and the widow's resources?

7) After your study of this passage, what would you say this parable is really about?

Application Questions:
8) Most of us can get discouraged in prayer. What are one or two things that discourage your prayer life?

9) Think of several ways that God has been faithful to you in the past year according to his promises. How does remembering God's past faithfulness encourage you to pray in the present?

Prayer:
- Break up into groups of two or three (or do this as a large group).
- Have everyone share one thing they have stopped praying for (or one thing they *should have been* praying for) due to disbelief.
- Take turns praying for those specific things.

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