

**Sermon Preached by Rev Noel Noack,  
Bishop, Lutheran Church of Australia, Queensland District.  
For the Opening Service,  
LCAQD Convention of Synod  
Held at Peace Lutherah church, Gatton  
31 May – 1 June 2014.**

**Sermon Text: Luke 11.1-13**

**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.”**

**5 Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; 6 a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’ 7 And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ 8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.**

**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; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.**

**11 “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!”**

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Brothers and Sisters inChrist,

This weekend our District gathers in Convention at Peace Lutheran Church, Gatton. It is a time of gathering in worship, reflecting upon and discussing the work of the Church, of hearing of our Lord - active in his Church, joining in fellowship and a time for making decisions which will lead us into the future with hope and anticipation.

How better to begin our time together than at the feet of Jesus, listening to his Word. The words of our Convention theme *Lord Teach us to pray* (Luke 11.1) invite us to sit beside the disciples in Jesus’ presence, ready to receive instruction, encouragement, strength.

We gather as a Church facing great challenges. We are anxious about membership numbers in many Congregations, we are anxious about insufficient resources, we are anxious that many of our young people lack commitment to our Lord and his Church. We feel overwhelmed.

If you think this is new for the Church. If you think that we are unique in facing serious and threatening challenges, then think again. It was no different for Jesus. There were threats against his ministry, plans made to undermine his work, challenges to his teaching, accusations against his character and rejection of his claims. Ultimately it all led to the sham trial, false accusations, cruel torture and finally his death by crucifixion. He died as our Saviour, he rose as victor over sin, death and the devil.

In all this Jesus' followers noted his peaceful and contained manner. He was the epitome of steadfast conviction. Nothing would dissuade him from doing his Father's will.

What was his secret for such strength and commitment?

Jesus was a man of prayer. Jesus' whole mission was steeped in prayer.

The ministry of Jesus was an intimate partnership with the Heavenly Father. Jesus communed intimately in prayer with the heavenly Father. In prayer he sought his direction .... his strength .... to do his will .... to draw all people to him.

The Bible words chosen for this Convention's theme are introduced: ***One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. Luke 11.1*** Prayer was his habit. It was fundamental in his life and ministry in obedience to the heavenly Father.

***When he finished (praying), one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." Luke 11:1-3***

This was the teachable moment

His followers had quietly observed Jesus. Finally they asked to be taught, they wanted to learn, they wanted that intimate relationship with the heavenly Father.

So Jesus taught them.

Prayer and the Word of God are inseparable companions.

God speaks, we listen;

Jesus teaches – we learn

As we hear, the Word of God calls us to come into the gracious presence of the Father, to hear of his love, to respond with thanks and praise, to respond in holy conversation – in prayer, and to respond in Christian service empowered by the Spirit. ***Your kingdom come***, they were taught to pray.

Jesus taught that the posture of prayer is the posture of humble dependence upon the heavenly Father, even in the basics of daily living – ***Give us each day our daily bread***. In another place Jesus said: ***apart from me you can do nothing***. John 15.5 Our reliance upon our Lord is total for ***every good and perfect***

**gift is from above.** James 1.17 He is the almighty God, we are mortal humans Unless he grants it, there will be no blessing.

We pray not only because of our dependence upon God but above all because of his command and promise.

Jesus said: ***Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Luke 11.9f***

Jesu taught well.

After his Ascension the disciples gathered in Jeruslaem seeking the Lord's will for the small band of believers. ***The Apostles joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. Acts 1.14***

God's response was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Peter preached ... ***three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts 2.41***

And that first Christian community: ***devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:41-43***

Following this we read that ***the number of disciples was increasing. Acts 6.1*** Demands upon the Apostles became so great they requested additional support so they could ***give their attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.*** Acts 6:3-5

This commitment to prayer flowed into the life of the growing Church. St Paul encouraged the Christians of Thessalonica saying: ***we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. 2 Thessalonians 1:10-12***

Furthermore the engagement of the Church with the world begins in prayer. St Pauls writes in encouraging the Church saying: ***I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— <sup>2</sup>for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. <sup>3</sup>This is good, and pleases God our Savior, <sup>4</sup>who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2.1-3***

How this encourages us! How this changes our outlook and demeanour! How wonderful to hear of the refreshment given to Christ by the heavenly Father, what a blessing to be refreshed and empowered in our Christian life as we draw near to him in prayer and feed upon his Word.

That's what the Convention logo depicts. Note the open hands. They are hands cupped in anticipation of receiving, it is the attitude of prayer. The child's hands are encased within the adult's – a symbol of teaching, of modelling this humble dependency, this eager anticipation of receiving from our Lord. We come as children, taught by our Lord, to humbly desire the gifts which the Father has for us.

Prayer is fundamental to our life as disciples of Christ. Everyone can pray – all are invited to pray – regularly, daily, ceaselessly - for we depend upon the daily blessing of the Father. It is so for the Church. All the blessings we desire, all that we plan to do, can only be done with the Lord granting his blessing. Let us seek it, desire it and grow in it.

***Lord, teach us to pray. Amen***