

PRAYER MONTH MESSAGES

INTERCEDING WITH IMPORTUNITY

Luke 11 and Luke 18
Faith Church of Linden

By Daniel Patz on January 4, 2026

The following notes are a draft of my sermon. These are not my pulpit notes or a manuscript I use to preach with but something I type up before writing out my “pulpit notes”. I hope they are helpful.

Introduction

Good morning, church family. Last Sunday, we launched into our preparation for January Prayer Month by diving into Jesus' School of Prayer from Luke 11:1-13.

In that sermon, we explored prayer more generally—how Jesus teaches us to approach God as our Father, to persist in asking, and to trust in His goodness. This morning, I want to build on that foundation by focusing on a specific aspect of prayer: **importunity and intercession**. We'll examine how persistent, bold prayer on behalf of others is not just an option but a vital part of our life in Christ.

I have four statements—commands, appeals, and exhortations—to guide us today:

1. Intercede with Importunity
2. Fixate on the Reward
3. Know This Is Your Calling
4. Determine to Grow Today

Let's pray as we begin: *Heavenly Father, open our hearts to Your Word. Teach us to pray with persistence and passion for others. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

1. Intercede with Importunity (Perseverance/Persistence)

First, let's define our key terms. I debated using the word "**importunity**" because it requires explanation, but it's so fitting that I couldn't avoid it. "Importunity" or "importunate" as an adjective means persistence, especially to the point of annoyance. It's troublesomely urgent—overly persistent in request or demand. The kids' definition captures it well: making a nuisance of oneself with requests or demands.

This is exactly what we see in the parables Jesus tells in Luke 11 and Luke 18. We looked at the Luke 11 parable last week—the friend at midnight. Here's the full text again for context:

Luke 11:5-9 (ESV) 5 And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, 6 for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; 7 and he will answer from

within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? 8 I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. 9 And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

"Impudence" here translates to shameless audacity. The friend doesn't give up; he keeps knocking despite the inconvenience.

Similarly, in Luke 18, Jesus teaches us to pray and not give up through the parable of the persistent widow and the unrighteous judge:

Luke 18:1-8 (ESV) 1 And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. 2 He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. 3 And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' 4 For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" 6 And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. 7 And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? 8 I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

These parables illustrate importunate prayer: persistent, determined prayer, often with urgency and insistence. The term comes from the Latin "importunus," meaning inconvenient or unrelenting. In prayer, it reflects a willingness to keep coming to God, even "inconveniencing" Him with continual requests.

Now, apply this to **intercession**—the act of intervening on behalf of another, in this context through prayer. Jesus prayed for Himself, but He also interceded for others. He continues to intercede for us as our great High Priest:

Hebrews 7:25 (ESV) Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Romans 8:34 (ESV) Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Paul modeled this too. He always mentioned the churches in his prayers and asked for prayer in return:

Ephesians 1:16 (ESV) I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

In Ephesians 6, he exhorts us to intercede:

Ephesians 6:18 (ESV) praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

"Supplication" means asking or begging earnestly and humbly. Paul requests prayer for himself in Ephesians 6 and Colossians 4:

Colossians 4:2-4 (ESV) 2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. 3 At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— 4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

He highlights Epaphras as an example:

Colossians 4:12 (ESV) Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

And in 1 Timothy:

1 Timothy 2:1-2 (ESV) 1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

Even our church covenant reflects this: "to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer..."

So, **intercede with importunity**. Pray and don't stop praying. Ask like my children did when they were little—relentlessly. Ask like Andy Dufresne in *The Shawshank Redemption*, who wrote weekly letters to the state for prison library funds. After six years, when some funds came, he doubled down to two letters a week.

Ask until you get what you need. Ask until you are answered. Ask until He intervenes.

Charles Spurgeon said it well: "Some mercies are only given to us in answer to importunate prayer. There are blessings which, like ripe fruit, drop into your hand the moment you touch the bough. But there are others which require you to shake the tree again and again, until you make it rock with the vehemence of your exercise, for only then will the fruit fall down."

2. Fixate on the Reward

To encourage you in this, let's fixate on the reward of interceding with importunity. Matthew 6 tells us:

Matthew 6:6 (ESV) But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Hebrews reminds us:

Hebrews 11:6 (ESV) And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Oh, to dwell on the rewards:

1. God is glorified in our dependence and His answers.
2. Love is expressed and grown as we pray for others.
3. We grow in obedience and our relationship with God.
4. We share in Christ's intercessory work.
5. He promises to hear and answer.
6. His power is great, and He works mightily through prayer.

We grow spiritually. Others are impacted—souls saved, lives changed. Oh, the happiness of bearing the fruit of answered prayers in the souls of others!

3. Know This Is Your Calling

Individually and as a church, we are **priests**! Revelation declares:

Revelation 1:5-6 (ESV) 5 and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood 6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Peter echoes this:

1 Peter 2:4-5 (ESV) 4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:9 (ESV) But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

The temple was a house of prayer for the nations—we are that temple now. Embrace your calling as priests.

Who is called? If you've been saved, you are. All Christians share in Christ's priestly office.

To stimulate your imagination, consider inspiring examples:

Family Examples (from Tim Challies' book *Devoted: Great Men and Their Godly Mothers*)

- Elizabeth Newton prayed as a young mother for her son John Newton. She died young, but he credited her prayers for his salvation and decades of impact.
- Amelia Taylor prayed earnestly for her son Hudson, who was turning away from the Lord. On a holiday, she locked herself in a room and prayed for hours until assured. Meanwhile, Hudson found a gospel tract and was saved. His 13-year-old sister was also praying.
- Angela Yuan, saved as an adult atheist, prayed for her son living a debauched life. She turned an unused shower into a prayer closet, her knees calloused from hours of prayer. She fasted every Monday, once for 39 days straight, praying his friends would abandon him. God answered.

Fathers like James Paton, father of missionary John G. Paton to the New Hebrides. Paton described the family's prayer closet, where they tiptoed past as their father poured out intercessions for his children, praying God would use them on the mission field.

None of us can remember that any day ever passed unhallowed thus; no hurry for market, no rush to business, no arrival of friends or guests, no trouble or sorrow, no joy or excitement, ever prevented at least our kneeling around the family altar, while the High Priest led our prayers to God, and offered himself and his children there. And blessed to others, as well as to ourselves, was the light of such example! I have heard that, in long after years, the worst woman in the village of Torthorwald then leading an immoral life, but since changed by the grace of God, was known to declare, that the only thing that kept her from despair and from the hell of the suicide, was when in the dark winter nights she crept close up underneath my father's window, and heard him pleading in family worship that God would convert "the sinner from the error of wicked ways and polish him as a jewel for the Redeemer's crown." "I felt," said she, "that I was a burden on that good man's heart, and I knew that God would not disappoint him. That thought kept me out of Hell, and at last led me to the only Saviour." (from John Paton's Autobiography)

Like Job: Job 1:3-5 (ESV) so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east. 4 His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5 And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them, and he would **rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all**. For Job said, "It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." **Thus Job did continually.**

Apply this beyond parents. Reasons to pray for your children's salvation:

1. Their salvation is so great a prize that it is worth all the pains your prayer may cost.
2. Few will pray for them if you do not.
3. No one else can pray for them as you do.
4. Omitting it is perilous to them and you.
5. It eases other parental duties.
6. Prayer calls divine power essential for their salvation.
7. By their salvation in answer to your prayers, Christ is glorified.

For their welfare:

1. God's power counteracts any evil you've done them.
2. Critical periods require incessant prayer.
3. It leads to better understanding of them.
4. It increases holy desires for them.
5. It overcomes difficulty in religious discussions.
6. It secures God's aid in their obedience.
7. Others may imitate you.
8. In need, God's power avails.

Pastors/Church Examples Pastors must pray; without it, we fail our calling. A church with prayerless elders is impoverished.

Spurgeon knew his congregation prayed for him: "May God help me, if you cease to pray for me! Let me know the day and I must cease to preach. Let me know when you intend to cease your prayers and I will cry, 'O my God, give me this day my tomb, and let me slumber in the dust.'" (Spurgeon, "Prayer, the Forerunner of Mercy," Vol. 3, 255-256)

4. Determine to Grow Today

Finally, how do we pray with importunity?

Start today. Make a list—start small.

Ten minutes a day... please. Consider using prayer cards.

Prayer walk. Pray in the car. Pray with perseverance.

Conclusion

Church, let's commit to interceding with importunity. Fixate on the rewards, embrace your priestly calling, and grow today. As we enter Prayer Month, may God find faith on earth through our persistent prayers. Amen.