



## **Sermon Discussion Guide for Groups**

# **A Friend At Midnight**

**Preached by Andrew Arndt**

**June 14, 2026**

### **Summary**

*Have someone in your group read the following summary aloud.*

In this sermon, Pastor Andrew teaches on prayer using Jesus's instruction to His disciples in Luke 11. He begins by establishing a foundational truth: God genuinely welcomes and wants our prayers. Drawing from the creation narrative and Psalm 8, he reminds us that we are made in the image of God, the crown jewel of creation, and that God is not annoyed or dismissive when we come to Him. This truth sets the stage for understanding why prayer is not a burden but an invitation into friendship with God.

Pastor Andrew then walks through the Lord's Prayer as a model, showing that effective prayer begins with God (hallowing his name and inviting His kingdom) before moving to our needs. He also revisits the parable of the friend at midnight, clarifying that the "shameless audacity" in the story is not about pestering God but about the social obligation to meet a need when one is present. He concludes with the powerful point that when we pray, we do not just receive

answers to our requests. We receive God Himself, in the person of the Holy Spirit, which is the greatest gift of all.

## Key Passages

- Luke 11:1-13
- Psalm 8:3-9
- 1 John 5:14-15
- 2 Timothy 1:1-6

## Opening Prayer

*Open your session in prayer, using the words below or your own*

**Heavenly Father**, we come before you today as your children, made in your image and loved beyond measure. As we gather to discuss your word and the gift of prayer, we ask that you open our hearts and minds to what you want to teach us today. Remove any distractions, any doubts, and any wrong ideas we have carried about who you are and how you hear us. Holy Spirit, fall fresh on this group. Lead us into deeper friendship with you and with one another. May this time together draw us closer to your presence. In Jesus's name, **Amen**.

## Getting Going

*Allow time for each member to answer the following questions before moving on.*

What is one thing you remember praying for as a child, and how did that experience shape how you think about prayer today?

## Discussion Questions

*Answer as many of these questions as time and interest allow.*

1. Pastor Andrew said that God genuinely welcomes and wants our prayers. Do you find it easy or difficult to believe that God is not annoyed or dismissive when you come to Him? What has shaped that belief?
2. The sermon contrasted the ancient Babylonian view of humans as slaves to the gods with the biblical view of humans as the crown jewel of creation made in God's image. How does understanding your identity as an image-bearer of God change the way you approach prayer?
3. Pastor Andrew pointed out that the disciples observed Jesus praying and were so drawn to it that they asked Him to teach them. What do you think it looked like when Jesus prayed that made His disciples want to learn? What would it look like for your own prayer life to have that effect on others?
4. Jesus taught his disciples to begin prayer by focusing on God (hallowing his name and inviting His kingdom) before bringing personal needs. How does starting with God rather than your needs change the tone and direction of your prayers?

5. The sermon addressed the danger of "silly prayers," meaning prayers that are more about personal comfort and material gain than about God's will. Have you gone through a season when your prayers felt more like a wish list than a conversation with your Father? What shifted or needs to shift?
6. Pastor Andrew reframed the parable of the friend at midnight, explaining that the "shameless audacity" was not about pestering God but about the social obligation to respond to a need. How does this reframing change your understanding of persistence in prayer?
7. The sermon ended with the surprising conclusion that the greatest gift God gives us in prayer is not the answer to our requests but God Himself, in the person of the Holy Spirit. How does that truth encourage or challenge you in seasons when your prayers seem unanswered?
8. Pastor Andrew led us in praying the Lord's Prayer together as a model. What part of that prayer felt most alive or most challenging for you personally, and why?

## **Making It Personal**

*Take the opportunity noted below to apply this week's sermon to your everyday life.*

This week, set aside time each day to pray through the Lord's Prayer slowly and intentionally. Before you bring your personal needs to God, spend at least a few minutes focusing on who God is: hallowing His name, inviting His kingdom, and

thanking Him for His presence. Keep a simple journal of what you notice as you shift the starting point of your prayers from your needs to God Himself. At the end of the week, reflect on whether this practice changed how you experienced prayer or how you saw God.

## **Key Takeaways**

*Commit to memory one point from the message before dismissing.*

- God genuinely welcomes and wants our prayers. He is not dismissive or annoyed when we come to him, because we are made in his image and are the crown jewel of his creation.
- Effective prayer begins with God, not with our needs. The Lord's Prayer models starting with the hallowing of God's name and the coming of His kingdom before moving to requests for provision, forgiveness, and protection.
- Praying according to God's will, as revealed in Scripture and modeled by Jesus, gives us confidence that God hears us.
- The parable of the friend at midnight is not about pestering God into action. It is about the certainty that when a need is present, God, like a good friend or parent, will rise to meet it.

- The greatest gift we receive in prayer is not the answer to our requests but God Himself. When we come to the Father, we do not just get our needs met. We get God, and that is more than enough.

## Closing Prayer

*Have someone from your group close your time in prayer, using the words below or your own.*

**Father**, we thank you for this time together and that you welcome us into your presence not as strangers or slaves but as beloved children made in your image. We thank you that prayer is not a performance or a formula but a friendship, an open door into the life of God Himself. As we leave today, we ask that you hallow your name in each of our lives. Let your kingdom come into our homes, our relationships, our bodies, and our fears. Give us what we need today, and forgive us as we choose to forgive others. Lead us away from temptation and keep us close to you. And above all, give us yourself. Give us your Holy Spirit, because you are what we need most. May we carry the confidence this week that you hear us, and that because you hear us, we already have what we have asked of you. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and all God's people said, **Amen.**