

SUNDAY LINE AND WORLD MINISTRIES



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Caring for children around the world

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FROM BIGGEST BULLY TO BEST FRIEND Metro Kids, Surrey, BC

with Director Graham Hanson

"When the Metro Kids team come by for their sidewalk Kids Klub during the summer months, all the bad influences scatter and kids come out to play," commented Carrie's mother recently. "The rest of the time it isn't safe for children to be outside, even in their own playground."

This was the reality in little Carrie's life:

'Carrie' first started coming to Super Saturday Kids Klub when she was 3 years old, following her older siblings. She really enjoyed the program and her mom built friendships with the Metro Kids volunteers and staff. After a few years the family had to move to a different apartment complex and they lost touch with the Metro Kids ministry for a period of time. In their new apartment complex, the family found themselves surrounded by a lot of brokenness, many angry children, rampant prostitution and drug abuse. Carrie was badly bullied when she first moved to the new complex. One young girl in particular, used to chase Carrie with a stick.



was able to reconnect with Carrie and her family once again. As Carrie got on the bus to return to Kids Klub with the other children in her new apartment complex, she was alarmed when she saw that her main bully was already seated. Since then, however, a transforming miracle has taken place. Through Kids Klub and the teaching about treating others with respect and helping others, these two girls have now become best friends. The girl who used to be the biggest bully is now Carrie's biggest defender.

Metro Kids also served this complex and the team

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A YEAR OF ANSWERED PRAYERS!

Key Scripture: Luke 11:9

"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.' "

The context of our passage centers on the request: "Jesus, teach us how to pray."

Jesus begins by teaching His disciples what we call "the Lord's Prayer" (which really isn't the Lord's prayer, but would be better called "the Kingdom Prayer") and then tells them a parable about a determined person who came knocking at his friend's house at midnight demanding that he give him some bread to feed some unexpected visitor.

The parable that Jesus uses is really all about praying with persistence.

As we read the parable it makes one wonder . . . who needs this kind of a friend? Most friends would simply never act that way if they were truly a friend. But this parable really isn't about friends on earth; this parable is about getting God's attention to our prayers. God is not simply an unrelated friend of ours. He is our heavenly Father who promises to answer prayer.

Jesus teaches that our prayers must involve 3 things: asking ... seeking ... and knocking.

First Jesus says: **"Ask and it shall be given unto you."** Jesus assumes that since we pray it is an indication that we believe in a Holy God who invites us to come to Him in prayer and supplication.

In another parable about prayer in Luke 18:9-14, Jesus tells a story of two men and two prayers with two different results. The first prayer came from a Pharisee who wore all his religion on the outside. He assumed that God looked on the

outside – at the shell - rather than the kernel. He was all about praising himself rather than praying to God. In fact he was very impressed with himself in his conversation with himself . . . he said: "I am not as other men," and then he continued talking about himself and never asking God for anything; but where he went wrong is that he forgot that he was standing before a Holy God as a sinner who needed salvation.

The tax collector, on the other hand, understood that he was a sinner and couldn't even so much as lift his eyes up to heaven, but began beating his breast saying, "God be merciful to me because I am a sinner." In this case the tax collector did ask God for something. He asked for mercy.

Jesus answer was obvious: **"I tell you, this man [tax collector] went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee; for everyone that exalts himself will be brought down, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted."** (Luke 18:14).

Both the Old and New Testaments emphasize that God will not tolerate the proud and He honours the humble.

1 Peter 5:6 puts it this way: **"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."**

Secondly, Jesus says: **"Seek and you shall find."** Seeking really involves some kind of action on our part. Most people simply never get beyond the asking stage. Seeking always involves some sort of activity on our part.

In Matthew 13:45-46 Jesus said: **"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."**

Suppose this merchant should say, "Lord I want a pearl, please give me a pearl?" Do you know what God's response might be? "Look for it and I will help you find it."

The third thing that Jesus says we are to do is: **"Knock and it shall be opened."**

We should not only knock but we should keep on knocking. You may be asking whether our praying involves a struggle, and the answer to that question is yes!! Yes, our praying does involve a struggle . . . it means work.

Some Bible teachers would tell us that continued asking or struggling in prayer is really a sign of lack of faith. But the Bible is full of stories where prayer involved a struggle, an effort, of beseeching, long hours, and warfare.

One of the earliest instances of this is found in the story of Jacob. Genesis 32:24-28: **"So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, 'Let me go, for it is daybreak.' But Jacob replied, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.' The man asked him, 'What is your name?' 'Jacob,' he answered. Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.' "**

Notice the words that describe the struggle through which Jacob went - he wrestled all night until the break of day, and then wrestled again and wouldn't let go until He received God's blessing.

When God spoke to Jeremiah it was made very clear to the prophet that when he prayed there would have to be an intensiveness and earnestness if he expected God to answer his prayer.

Jer. 29:12-13: **"Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."**

We all want God to answer prayer our way, but we must remember that God's plan is always much better.

When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, He earnestly prayed three times for God to lift the cup that He was about to partake. The answer Jesus received was NO!

Ruth Graham, the late wife of famous American

evangelist Billy Graham, said she prayed and prayed that God would allow her to marry a certain man. She was so grateful that God did not answer her prayer for at the time she was praying she had not yet met Billy Graham. She realised that if she had married the other man it might have been a disaster.

Another problem that we often have with our prayers is that we pray with the wrong motive. James 4:3: **"When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."** The only one we fool when we pray that way is ourselves, into thinking that we can coerce God into doing something to serve our selfish desires.

And finally we sometimes might ask for the right thing to be done in the right way, but we ask at the wrong time. There is a time and place for everything and sometimes our timing doesn't line up with God's timing. This was the obvious case in Abraham's life when he created an Ishmael instead of waiting for an Isaac. This was also the case with King Saul who couldn't wait for Samuel the prophet to offer the sacrifice to God, and as a consequence he lost his position as Israel's king. I believe that we have all at one time or another gone ahead of God instead of waiting, and have reaped the sour rewards of some unintended outcome.

The Psalmist gives this excellent advice: Psalm 27:14: **"Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD."**

AS WE COME TO THE START OF A NEW YEAR, LET THIS BE A YEAR OF PERSISTENT PRAYER, BY ASKING, SEEKING AND KNOCKING.

**MAY THIS BE THE YEAR OF
BREAKTHROUGH FOR ALL
OF OUR PRAYERS!**

Blessings in Christ,

Pastor Roman





*Sunday Line
gifted beautiful
hard-cover books
of Psalm 91 for
children.*



Carrie's life has been enriched by God through Metro Kids. She didn't have any direction in her life before, but now as she grows up, she has a strong desire to give back to others and promote equality between different races and people with disabilities. She has experienced firsthand the peace that can come in difficult circumstances when there are caring people around her, and she wants to extend that peace to others.

Christmas Joy!

Metro Kids gathered shoe boxes full of treats for girls and boys and distributed them to the neighbourhood apartment complexes along their bus route just before Christmas. It was an opportunity to bring unexpected delight to each child within each apartment. Parents from Iraq, Iran, Burma, and China opened their doors with amazement as free gifts were offered to their children. In January the Metro Kids team will follow up each home inviting the children to the Saturday Kids Klub or Pre-Teens Connexion.

Saturday Kids Klub Christmas Special

The beautifully decorated center quickly filled with row after row of children as the buses arrived from the nearby neighbourhoods carrying girls and boys from the apartment complexes. Excitement was in the air as the kids played games, sang, shouted exuberantly, and listened intently to the Christmas story presented through drama and object lessons. All the while the children wondered which shoe box stacked along the stage might be theirs and whether they would win the draw for the girl's or the boy's bike.

