

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN PROVIDED AS A TOOL FOR THAT.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

If you've ever seen a game of poker, then you've no doubt heard the expression "all in." It's the phrase used to describe the moment when a player pushes all of his or her chips to the middle of the table. It's a moment of full commitment to whatever happens next, and in Luke 18, we find a number of "all in" moments in the life of Jesus and His followers. We'll also see that **there will always be a way out when we make the decision to go all in.** When it comes to a life of prayer, the way out often comes when we feel like we've not been heard. Luke 18:1-8 offers us 3 keys to help us stay all in when it seems like our prayers aren't being answered:

1. **No can be normal.** I know that this can sound a little too absolute, but Jesus is clear in both the parable and the meaning of the parable that we shouldn't be surprised to hear nothing. In fact, it seems as if Jesus is saying that when we're all in on prayer, hearing nothing can actually motivate us to keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking because we know that the "no" isn't the end.
2. **Moving past the no must become the new normal.** There are so many stories in the Bible of people who could have quit but didn't. The Israelites were in the desert for 40 years before they went into the Promised Land. What if they had stopped walking on year 39, day 364? Daniel's answer to prayer came on day 21. What if he had stopped on day 20? This widow in Luke 18 kept on knocking. The judge refused to answer, but she refused to leave! May we all be filled with that kind of desperation, persistence and tenacity in prayer!
3. **Faith can turn the no into a yes.** Jesus wrapped up the parable asking a simple question: when He returns, will He find faith on the earth? His question reveals the final key that will turn us from people who pray to the no into people who pray through the no: faith. How do we know if we have faith? We don't give up, because we know that Jesus is the yes to every promise God has made (2 Cor. 1:20).

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- How would you describe your prayer life? "On fire," "off and on," or "cold as ice?"
- How many times would you have knocked on the judge's door before you accepted silence as the answer? Why do you think it's so hard to make moving past the no a "new normal" in prayer?
- Read Colossians 4:2. How can being thankful help us stay all in on prayer? How can you incorporate thankfulness into your prayer life?
- Read 1 Timothy 2:8. What 2 specific hindrances to prayer does Paul mention? How can anger and quarreling be "faith killers" when it comes to prayer?
- Read John 15:7; Mark 11:24; and Jeremiah 33:3. How does the word "will" in these verses build your faith? How can these promises help you move past the no when no seems to be normal?
- Faith asks and keeps asking, seeks and keeps seeking, knocks and keeps knocking. Hebrews 4:14 reminds us to hold onto that faith **firmly**, and Hebrews 4:16 encourages us to approach the throne **boldly**. Close the night praying in faith for each other (and particularly for requests that may have been receiving a closed door response).