Dear Open Door Family,

There are times that I have been asked: Why should I pray? After all God knows what He is going to do and nothing I can do will change that. However, Jesus said *"when you pray"* Matt 6:5 and then proceeded to teach about prayer. Jesus not only taught His disciples to pray He himself spent time in prayer. The New Testament is full of prayers that are offered for others. As I read the following verses I was challenged in the area of prayer. May the Lord encourage us through these words to pursue Him in prayer more and more.

Mark 2:4-5 *(NIV) Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. [5] When Jesus saw* ***their faith****, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."*

As I was reading the gospel accounts of the four men who took their paralyzed friend to Jesus, I was struck by the fact that they did not give up. They heard Jesus was in the area so they talked their friend into letting them carry him to Jesus. After having carried their friend to that location I'm sure they tried to get as close as they could. The crowds were fairly large and Jesus was actually inside. Imagine four men carrying another man on a mat of some kind trying to push through a large crowd but they did not give up. Perhaps they waited for awhile hoping that Jesus would come out. But at some point it became obvious that they were not going to be able to bring their friend easily to Jesus. They could have simply said we gave it our best, let's go home; we will try again tomorrow. But instead they went up on the roof, made an opening by digging through it and lowered their friend right down in front of Jesus. They refused to quit. I wonder if it was as Jesus looked up at the faces of these four men looking down that he *"saw their faith."* As I thought about this the first thing that came to mind was the idea of prayer. I thought, who would I want to be praying for me when I'm struggling and hurting - someone who mentions me in passing or someone like these four guys. They did NOT quit, they kept on going, believing that Jesus could answer their request for their friend's health. They did NOT give up until they got an answer from Jesus. I wonder if I am that tenacious and persevering in my prayers. I'm not talking about being demanding and telling God what He must do. But of continuing to bring those things which are heavy on our hearts persistently before the Lord until He gives us peace about ceasing to pray about them.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, thank you that you told us to pray. That you told us to pray about simple things like food and temptation, as well as big things like Your Kingdom. Please Lord, may I learn more and more how to spend time in Your presence in persevering prayer. Please help me to keep on praying when the only answer I get is *not now*. Lord, may my heart be always submissive and open to Your correction and leading as I pray. Keep me from being Demanding like a spoiled child. May I honor You in the way that I pray.

Pastor Mark Kieft

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