

A short reflection:

We pray because Jesus commands us to. Again and again in the Gospels, he calls us to prayer. In Luke 18:1, we hear this crystal clear:

“Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.”

It’s an invitation—but it’s also a promise: that in the act of praying, even when we feel like giving up, something powerful happens.

Prayer is about relationship. It’s about bringing our hearts, our fears, our hopes, and our struggles into the light of God’s love.

But let’s be honest: prayer can be complicated. Sometimes it doesn’t seem to “work” the way we expect. We ask, we hope, we plead—yet sometimes what we long for doesn’t happen. Our prayers can seem to hang in the air, unanswered.

And yet, even when it doesn’t change the outcome, prayer always changes *us*.

There’s a powerful scene in the film *Shadowlands* that captures this so well. After Joy, the wife of C.S Lewis, has been diagnosed with terminal cancer, Lewis is asked why he keeps praying for her, even though she will likely die. His answer is simple, but it carries such weight:

“I don’t pray to change God. I pray because it changes me.”

In that moment, Lewis isn’t denying the pain or the heartbreak. He’s acknowledging that prayer, at its heart, is not about manipulating God or getting what we want. Prayer is about opening ourselves to God’s presence and letting his Spirit work in us—softening our hearts, comforting us, and drawing us closer to him.

Prayer changes us. It doesn’t remove the struggles we face, but it shapes us in the middle of them. It deepens our faith, helps us see glimpses of God’s goodness even in the hardest places, and roots us in a love that will not let us go.

As we begin these 24 hours of prayer, let's hold on to that truth. We're not praying to twist God's arm or to force answers from him. We're praying to open our hearts and lives more fully to his Spirit—trusting that in those quiet moments, he is with us, he is listening, and he is at work.

Let's pray with faith, with honesty, and with hope and remembering Jesus' words: *pray and not give up*. Whether the world changes around us or not, prayer will change us. It will draw us deeper into the heart of God, where we find the courage and grace to keep going, and the joy of knowing we are never alone.