



***GOD CAN BE  
TRUSTED***

## TO LISTEN TO US

Many people pray. Especially when they're desperate. Maybe a loved one is dying. A hard decision needs to be made. Or there is a crisis. But there are always those nagging questions: Will God hear me? Will he do something? Can he?

Not long after Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, his followers asked him to teach them to pray. Jesus gave them the words which we know as the Lord's prayer (Luke 11:1-4). Jesus told another story about prayer in Luke 11:5-13.

## DURING A CRISIS

Jesus drew his stories from everyday life. He gave them such an interesting twist that they held people's attention.

This time he began with a question. "Which of you," he asked, "if someone came to stay without warning late at night, would not hesitate to ask your neighbour for help when you found you'd run out of food?"

We wouldn't think of waking someone in the middle of the night. We'd go to a fast-food outlet and buy a hamburger or barbecued chicken. And if we were short of cash, we'd go to the automatic teller. For us, the unexpected guest is no real problem.

But if you lived in a village in ancient Palestine, you'd find people were very dependent on others. They had a reputation for hospitality which they guarded jealously. At any time, day or night, it was expected that a neighbour would act as a friend and help anyone in need, especially if they had a guest.

## HE DOESN'T HESITATE

The opening words of Jesus' story touched a nerve. His hearers agreed. "We wouldn't hesitate if a neighbour called for help, even if it was the middle of the night."

In smaller towns, bread, which was round and flat, was baked in a village oven. Meals were served in bowls and pieces of bread were broken off and dipped into the bowl to scoop up food.

It was important that fresh, whole bread was provided at the table for guests. And because the village was small, everyone would know who had baked bread that day.

So Jesus' story took shape: a small village known for its hospitality, an unexpected guest, and no fresh bread. "Which of you," Jesus asked, "having a friend arriving at midnight, wouldn't hesitate to go to a neighbour and ask for help?"

You wouldn't hesitate. But imagine if your neighbour refused, shouting out that the house was locked and everyone was in bed? "Can you imagine that happening?" is the thrust of Jesus' words.

"He may not be too happy, but he would get up and do it, not so much because of the hammering at his door but because of his sense of shame. He was bound by honour to help; he'd be prepared to provide bread and to show proper hospitality to a guest."



## **HE KNOWS OUR NEEDS BETTER THAN WE DO**

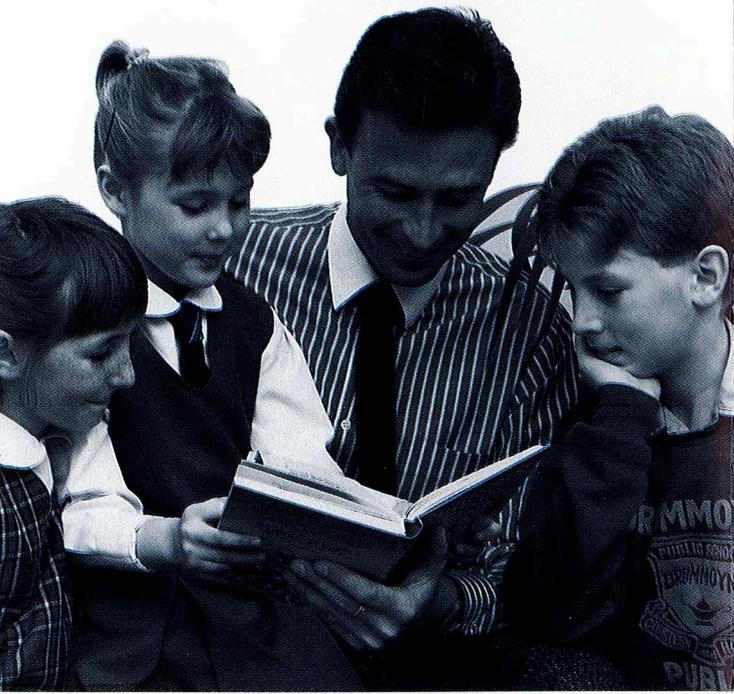
This is a parable about God. Because of who he is and what he is like, he will always respond to our requests. Because of his nature, he will give us much more than we have asked for. God is a God of integrity, honour, and generosity.

It's easy to be confused about God. For some people he is no more than a glorified Santa Claus. For others he is unpredictable. To others he may seem worse than an unfriendly neighbour, or an unloving parent. Jesus' point is that God has our best interests at heart: God knows what's good for us and what's not.

MOORE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE LIBRARY



3 2042 10102618 9



## **WE ONLY HAVE TO ASK**

Jesus says that anyone who wants to speak to God should do it! He says that anyone who really seeks him will find him.

Just as loving human parents will give good gifts to their children, so will God give good things to his children. In fact he'll do much more because he's the perfect parent. He loves us beyond any love imaginable, and he provides what is best for us.

## **WE CAN DO IT NOW**

Jesus says that God wants us to become his children: this is his deepest longing. If we genuinely ask him to help us, he will give us all we need. And more: he will adopt us as his very own people, members of his family.

But we must let God be God in our lives. We can't use him like a sugar-daddy. As a loving parent who nurtures us to be the people we're meant to be, he asks obedience. Of course he understands our natural disobedience, and that we can't do it ourselves. It took Christ's death to pay for our foolishness and disobedience. It took his resurrection to show us that God keeps his promises.

God can be trusted. Why not simply speak with him? He's listening now.

*Written by John Mason in consultation with the AIC Committee.*

## **ANGLICAN INFORMATION OFFICE**

© Copyright Anglican Inquiry Centre 1989  
PO Box Q17, Queen Victoria Building 2000