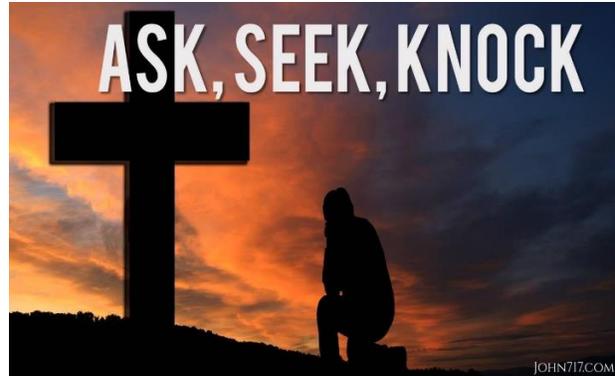


A community that celebrates (harvest) Reading Matthew 7: 7 – 1 **study 7**

Read the passage. This passage coming as it does, as Jesus nears the conclusion of his Sermon on the Mount, is well known but has proved a puzzle to many. We need to start by considering who it is that makes what seems to be such a remarkably open-ended promise. It is God the Father, who we are invited to call 'Abba, Father'.

This invitation alone, the invitation into the closest relationship, is cause enough to celebrate!



Celebrate together by **reading Psalm 145** – God's greatness and his grace to us.

Back to our passage in Matthew

1. Many of us seem to have a built-in reluctance to ask for things. We just don't like asking.
 - 1a. Can you identify with this feeling? Where do you think it springs from?
 - 1b. Are you concerned that asking God for the wrong things will disappoint him? What sort of things are the right things to ask for? And what are not?
 - 1c. Have you ever had someone you love ask you for something, something you know you cannot supply, and in your fervent desire to please, sought other ways, other alternatives, to meet your loved ones needs? Perhaps even knowing what you will provide will actually prove better for them? Do you have any examples?
2. Verses 9-11 are the key to understanding this passage. What do they say of the character behind the promise in verses 7-8?
 - 2a. Give some thought to how God has blessed you. Perhaps some in the group could express how God has blessed them when times have been difficult and the outlook appeared bleak.
 - 2b. All parents seek to maintain an intimate, loving relationship with their children. A relationship where their children will feel free and able to talk to them about anything. Is that really a true reflection of our/your relationship with our Abba Father?
 - 2c. Given the character of God, do you think it strange that he should effectively say 'ask me for anything'?

God says he has time for us despite all he is dealing with all the time. He has time, space and love for us all the time, anytime. We should take him at his word, and celebrate! Ask, seek, knock. Tom Wright says 'Give it a try and see what happens, expect some surprise on the way, but don't expect that God will ever let you down'.