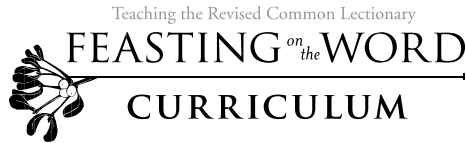


October 20, 2019
Persistent Prayer



Adult Resource
Sheet 1

Focus on Luke 18:1–8

Semicontinuous
Jer. 31:27–34
Ps. 119:97–104
Complementary Gen.
32:22–31 Ps. 121
2 Tim. 3:14–4:5
Luke 18:1–8

WHAT is important to know? —From “*Exegetical Perspective*” by Oliver Larry Yarbrough The two characters in this parable are a widow and a judge. About the widow we learn only that she sought “justice against [her] opponent” (v. 3) and was persistent in seeking it. The judge, however, is pointedly described as “unjust” (v. 6). Concern for widows (and orphans) is common in Jewish and Christian Scriptures. The widow’s persistence is to the point. If an

unjust judge can grant justice in response to badgering, *how much more* will God grant justice to those who cry out day and night. The disciples in the Gospel of Luke are taught again and again to persevere in prayer. The widow becomes a sign of this kind of prayerful faithfulness.

WHERE is God in these words? —From “*Theological Perspective*” by Margit Ernst-Habib The widow in Jesus’ parable represents not only the need to pray always, as Luke puts it, but also the Spirit’s incessant work of encouraging us to pray, the Spirit’s nagging persistence and unrelenting perseverance. This hopeful courage that the believers receive as a gift from the Holy Spirit leads not only to a meditative and introspective life of prayer, but to an active and “extrospective” life of prayer as well, one that includes *resistance* against all forms of injustice. As God’s children, the believers are called to join God’s resistance, equipped with the special gift of the Holy Spirit: resisting and persisting prayer, of which the stubborn and enduringly hopeful widow is an inspiring example.

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

—From “*Pastoral Perspective*” by
Kimberly Bracken Long

Jesus says, “God will not delay. God will help. God will grant justice.” If the Son of Man is to find faith on earth, we must understand that our prayers do not constitute so many unanswered pleas; rather, they are our participation in the coming reign of God. By praying continually, and not giving up hope, we live in the surety that God has not abandoned this world. Living in hope, we work, in whatever ways we can, for the justice and peace that is coming.

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

—From “*Homiletical Perspective*” by
John M. Buchanan

The early church certainly prayed for many things it did not receive: safety, protection from persecution, for instance. It did receive what it most needed: a sense of God’s loving presence and attentiveness, and the strength and resilience and fortitude it needed to survive. Count on God to come down on the side of justice. Count on God to hear the ones who have no power, no influence, no voice. Count on God to hear those who have nowhere else to turn. Count on God not always to grant your requests, but to hear, with loving, parental patience, the persistent prayers of your heart.

My Prayer Reflections

Complete the following:

My common prayer concerns include

Something I plan to pray for more frequently is

Some of the people without voice or who are marginalized and who need my persistent prayers are

A prayer that I will commit to praying persistently each day in the next two weeks is *(write the prayer and take this sheet home)*
