



# DISCUSSION GUIDE

## WEEK 9: THE PERSISTENT WIDOW

### Read the Text

#### Luke 18:1-8

<sup>1</sup>And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. <sup>2</sup>He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. <sup>3</sup>And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ <sup>4</sup>For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, <sup>5</sup>yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’” <sup>6</sup>And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. <sup>7</sup>And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? <sup>8</sup>I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

### Main Point

In this parable, Jesus sets aside nuance and directly tells us what He’s about to teach: always pray and don’t lose heart. As Christians, we live in a tension of living in a broken, fallen, sinful world while also knowing that Jesus will return to restore it all to His Kingdom. This is known as the *already but not yet*, and it refers to knowing that God’s kingdom is coming, but it’s not yet here.

So how do we get through this time of waiting? Some of us may distract ourselves with the fleeting pleasures of the world, others may fall into hopelessness and despair that change and restoration will ever really happen, and others may fall into doubt and deconstruction and lose their trust and faith in who God is. Jesus invites us into more though. He invites us to communicate with our Creator and Father. Through this parable, Jesus shows us that ***persistent prayer keeps us from losing heart.*** While we wait for sin, injustice, betrayal and even death to finally be eliminated, we ought to pray to God in order to not lose heart and give up that God will do anything about it.

This parable presents a somewhat confusing dynamic between the judge and widow. Are we to take from their interaction that we are *bothering* God with our nagging prayers? No! Jesus' point is that praying isn't merely about getting an answer. Rather, ***persistent prayer has the power to shape our hearts.*** So if an unrighteous judge can acquiesce to persistent begging, *how much more* will God delight in us talking to Him, pleading to Him, and sharing our hearts with Him? Prayer is so much more than asking God for things. It grows our relationship with him, bends our hearts towards His, and helps us trust Him more.

There's an interesting word in this parable: speedily. Jesus says that God will give justice speedily. What are we to infer from that? When we are Kingdom-minded, we quickly realize that our worldly definition of speedy is very different from the Heavenly definition. The truth is that God is patiently waiting for others to come to faith in Him. And we know that He will be true to His promise and that ***the Kingdom will come and justice will too.***

### **Reflect Together**

1. Why do you think God delights in us praying to Him? Do you sometimes struggle to believe that? What does this passage tell us about how He views and values our prayers?
2. How is your prayer life going right now? Where is it good? Where could it improve? What obstacles do you face in having a flourishing prayer life?
3. What's a commitment you can make this week to grow in your prayer life? Maybe it's to spend more time in prayer. Or to focus on adoring God more than submitting your requests. Or maybe it's to pray for things outside of yourself. Pick one way you'd like to grow in prayer and check in with each other about it next time you meet.

***Doxa has an amazing spiritual formation guide on prayer and you can check it out on our app.***