

Keep on Keeping on

This morning I was hearing about the parable of the unjust judge and the persistent widow in Luke's gospel. Luke tells us that:

'For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, "Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!" (Lk 18: 4 - 5).

Many are starting a new journey either at school, college or work. And we're all starting a new journey along this road sometimes called the new normal. The past 18 months has been a marathon for most and it has left many drained and weary. We wonder how to plan to move forwards, when the looming lockdown bear is waiting around the shadowy corner ready to raid our larder and drain us further.

We're tired, exhausted, ground down by the pressures of life and the pandemic. Some are weary to the point of giving up. And Jesus says look at this powerless widow, all alone. She has been exploited and had no-one to fight her corner. All she can do is cry out for justice, for wrongs to be put right, for the broken things to be mended and for an intervention of the one person who had the power. He can sort out the mess, the pain and the harm she's been caused. The point of this parable is to encourage us to never give up, never be discouraged, never lose hope but trust in our Father who longs to give us justice. He wants us to be persistent and continue daily in our prayers. This is the basis of living by faith. Prayer is the key to all we do and seek together as a Cluster.

My hope is that we find real energy and life-giving water to refresh our soul through prayer. Maybe consider finding a comfy sofa in a quiet room, switching off your phone and meditate over these verses from Psalm 131 for ten minutes:

*My heart is not proud, Lord,
my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters
or things too wonderful for me.
But I have calmed and quietened myself,
I am like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child I am content.*

Acknowledge that we do not have the reserves or the power to do what God has called us to do. But He does and we only have to trust Him along the way.

Blessings,

Joe (Rector)

Things to pray for:

- *The launch of the new website at the end of September*
- *The beginning of On the Way (Launches on 23rd Sept for our Area)*
- *The return of Amy our Families Leader in October*
- *Alpha Course (We are hoping to start a course if enough people are interested: Please contact Joe or Nikki if you wish to do this course).*
- *The forthcoming Leaders vision building day on 23rd October*

Useful Books on Prayer:

- Ø *Too Busy not to Pray* - Bill Hybels
- Ø *The 24-7 Prayer Manual: Anyone, Anywhere Can Learn to Pray Like Never Before* - Peter Greig
- Ø *Praying with Paul* - D A Carson
- Ø *Dirty Glory* - Peter Greig
- Ø *Prayer: Does it make any Difference* - Philip Yancey

Some Useful quotes about prayer:

"Pray continually." —*1 Thessalonians 5: 17 NIV*

"He who kneels the most, stands the best." —*D.L. Moody*

"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." —*Martin Luther*

"We pray when there's nothing else we can do, but God wants us to pray before we do anything at all." —*Oswald Chambers*

"When I pray for another person, I am praying for God to open my eyes so that I can see that person as God does." —*Philip Yancey*

"Prayer is an acknowledgment that our need of God's help is not partial but total." —*Alistair Begg*

"[Prayer] is the link between God's inexhaustible resources and people's needs." —*Charles Stanley*

"Don't pray because it makes sense to pray .. Pray because life doesn't make sense without prayer." *Noah Benshea*