Frisco First Baptist Church

THE PARABLES OF JESUS
PERSISTENT PRAYER
LUKE 18:1-8
11/29/2026

MAIN POINT

We are called to persist in prayer, not as a means of convincing God to act but as a means of deepening our delight in Christ.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

> **During what situations in daily life are you most likely to lose patience? When was the last time persistence paid off for you?**
>
> **What is the most persistently you have ever prayed for something? Was your prayer answered? What did you learn through that process?**

In the opening verses of Luke 18, Jesus taught His disciples a story that illustrates the value of persistent prayer. We should persist in prayer, not in order to convince God to act but because prayer is an invitation into God's presence. Thus, prayer is a precious gift given to us from God to deepen our delight in Christ.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 18:1-8.

> **What did Jesus say is the point of this parable?**
>
> **What finally made the unjust judge respond to the widow's plea?**

For a period of time, the judge dismissed the widow's incessant requests. He admitted his lack of reverence for God and regard for other people. The judge, however, valued his comfort and peace of mind. The widow was constantly pestering him. In order to get rid of the widow, the judge decided to rule in her favor. The judge's decision was not made on the basis of concern that the widow have her day in court and receive a fair judgment; his decision was completely self-serving. He wanted relief from a persistent irritant.

What characteristics of God encourage persistent prayer?

What does persistent prayer say about the nature of the Christian who prays? Why does God want us to pray with persistence when He already knows our concerns?

According to Jesus, what is the real question revealed by the unjust judge? As you listen to Jesus' words in verses 6-8, what surprises you? Why?

What does Jesus say about the character of God? What does He say about His disciples? How does what Jesus said encourage faith?

Jesus knew that living now while waiting for His return would be difficult. He knew we would have the temptation to lose heart, be discouraged, and give up on faith. He told this parable to remind us that God will indeed bring justice for His people. He wanted to give a promise of God to encourage us to keep pursuing Him. He wants us to stay in faith. At the end of all our stories, God prevails. He desires, however, that Christians remain focused on Him and committed to seeking Him in prayer.

Read Romans 8:31-39. How has God demonstrated His love for us? How might remembering the truths in these verses help us persist in prayer?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 10:38-42.

Compare and contrast Mary and Martha. Which sister do you resonate with more and why?

What was Jesus' reaction to Martha's interruption (vv. 40-42)? What was "the one thing" Mary chose? Why was it better?

The one necessary thing was to be ministered to by Jesus. Jesus knew that spiritual nourishment was far more important than physical nourishment. Jesus' commendation of Mary reminds us that our most precious possession is the relationship we have with God through Christ. Prayer is valuable because Christ is the most valuable gift in the universe. God has given us prayer to increase our joy in Him.

John Ortberg said, "The goal of prayer is not to get good at praying . . . The goal of prayer is to live all my life and speak all my words in the joyful awareness of the presence of God." What does Mary teach us about being joyfully aware of the presence of God?

How might keeping this goal in mind change your perspective on prayer? How might it change the way you pray?

Read Isaiah 55:1-3. What does God promise to those who draw near to Him in prayer? How might these promises encourage us to persist in prayer? How might remembering these promises make your prayers more joyful?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What is one step you might take this week to prioritize drawing near to God in prayer?

What does the widow teach us about being confident in our prayers? How does this example help us understand what God values and expects from His disciples?

Are your prayers filled with joy? How might you cultivate a joyful heart when you pray?

PRAYER

Close in a brief time of prayer, thanking God that He's concerned about the condition of our hearts and our motives for seeking Him. Pray that we would be persistent in our prayers while trusting in God with both faith and humility. Pray that God would use our prayers to deepen our joy in Christ.

COMMENTARY

LUKE 18:1-8

18:1. In spite of interruptions from the crowds and His opponents, Jesus consistently turned back to His disciples to teach them new truths about the kingdom. This time He augmented His teaching on prayer (see 3:21; 5:16; 6:12, 28; 9:18, 28-29; 11:1-13; 20:47; 22:40-46). Prayer is not one quick session of listing needs and expecting immediate results. Prayer is continuing to talk to God with persistence. Prayer is based on absolute faith in God, so it never gives up, knowing God will answer when and where He chooses. Prayer also knows that God expects us to keep on praying until the answer comes.

18:2-5. Another parable illustrates Jesus' teaching on persistent prayer. An emotionally passive judge settled cases in one town. He did so without passion, not caring for either party. He did so on the basis of his own wisdom and power, never looking to God for help, since he did not fear or believe in God. In an Israelite community where the judge was to be impartial and judgment ultimately belonged to God (Deut. 1:16-17), this judge was unfit for his job.

The judge met his match when a local widow pled for justice in a dispute with a neighbor. The nature of her grievance is of no concern for the story. The point is that she was a widow who never gave up. As a widow she should have received special protection and care from the justice system (Exod. 22:22; Deut. 10:18; 24:17-21; 27:19; cf. Jas. 1:27). No matter how long the judge ignored her or denied her plea, she returned to his court asking for justice. The judge finally threw up his hands in disgust and frustration. Religious grounds did not cause him to act. He had no religion. Social justice grounds did not cause him to act. He cared nothing for people. He simply had a job as a judge

and he did it. He did have limits to his patience. So, he finally gave in to the woman just to get rid of her.

18:6-8a. Jesus applied the story for His disciples. If an uncaring human judge acts like this, how much more does a loving heavenly Father care for His children. He will never put you off. He does care for you. You will get a quick answer. You will receive justice. But remember, this involves continuing to pray day and night. Your definition of quick may not equal God's definition.

18:8b. The problem is not with God. He will answer when you need it. You can count on that. The problem is with us. When Christ returns, will there be anyone here who calls out in faith day and night? Will we become so lackadaisical in our faith that we allow people of persistent prayer to become extinct? Will the second coming of Jesus find us persisting in prayer that His kingdom will come? Or will it find us trapped on the housetop trying desperately to get back into the house to find the possessions that we rely on more than we do on God? Persistent prayer, the work of the person of faith, continues on, no matter what the answer. When Christ returns, the person of persistent prayer will still be praying.

LUKE 10:38-42

10:38-39. The village in v. 38 was Bethany, just over the Mount of Olives and two miles east of Jerusalem. Martha and Mary were the sisters of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead (Jn 11:1-44). Sat at the Lord's feet… listening was the posture of a committed disciple.

10:40-42. Martha was distracted from what should have been her highest priority—learning from Jesus. She was worried and upset about all the household chores that needed to be done and irritated with her sister Mary because it was the role of women to serve men in such a setting. Jesus indicated that Martha's exclusive focus should be the same as her sister's—discipleship, an eternally commendable choice (it will not be taken away from her).