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Theme: “God Hears Persistent Prayer”

Ashram Community · 18 October 2026

KEY VERSE

Luke 18:1 – “Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.”

READINGS

Old Testament: 1 Samuel 1:1–18; Psalm: Psalm 40; Epistle: Romans 12:3–13; Gospel: Luke 18:1–8

Sunday – 18 October 2026

Today the Word of God gives us a message of great encouragement: God hears persistent prayer. There are times when we pray and receive an immediate answer. But there are also times when we pray for many months or even many years, and we wonder, “Does God hear me? Why has God not answered my prayer?” Perhaps someone sitting here today has been praying for a child, for healing, for a job, for a family problem, for a difficult relationship, or for a loved one who has gone away from God. You may have prayed many times and still see no answer. The Bible does not hide such experiences. Instead, it introduces us to people who prayed, waited, cried, and continued trusting God. Hannah is one such person. The widow in Jesus’ parable is another. Their stories teach us that when the answer is delayed, we should not conclude that God has forgotten us. Jesus Himself gives us the central message of today’s Gospel: “Always pray and not give up.”

Prayer Begins When We Bring Our Deepest Pain to God

In 1 Samuel 1, we meet Hannah. She was deeply troubled because she had no child. Her situation was made even more painful by the behaviour of Peninnah, who provoked and humiliated her. Hannah could have become bitter. She could have stopped praying. She could have blamed God. Instead, she went to the house of the Lord. The Bible says that “in her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly.” This is a beautiful picture of genuine prayer. Prayer is not pretending that everything is fine. Prayer is bringing our real life before God. Sometimes we pray with words. Sometimes we cry. Sometimes we do not even know what to say. But God understands the language of a broken heart. Hannah poured out her soul before the Lord. Eli initially misunderstood her and thought she was drunk. But Hannah explained, “I am a woman who is deeply troubled... I was pouring out my soul to the LORD.” Brothers and sisters, perhaps you cannot explain your pain to everyone around you. But you can take it to God. Your husband may not understand. Your wife may not understand. Your children may not understand. Your neighbours may not understand. But God understands. Psalm 34:18 says, “The LORD is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” When you are hurting, do not run away from God. Run towards God.

Persistent Prayer Refuses to Give Up

The second lesson comes from Jesus’ parable in Luke 18. He tells the story of a widow who repeatedly went to an unjust judge and asked for justice. The judge did not care about God or people. Yet the widow continued coming to him. Finally, because of her persistence, the judge gave

her what she was asking for. Jesus is not saying that God is like the unjust judge. Quite the opposite. If even an unjust judge eventually responds to persistent asking, how much more will our loving and righteous God hear His children? Jesus says: “And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night?” The widow teaches us something important: do not stop praying simply because the answer has not yet come. Sometimes we pray for a few days and then stop. Sometimes we pray for a few weeks and become discouraged. But Jesus says, “Always pray and not give up.” Persistent prayer does not mean trying to force God to do what we want. It means continuing to trust God even when we do not yet understand His answer. There is a difference between faith that demands and faith that trusts. We can say, “Lord, this is what I desire, but I trust Your wisdom and Your timing.”

Persistent Prayer Changes Us While We Wait

Psalm 40 gives us another dimension of prayer. The psalmist says: “I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry.” Notice the words: “I waited.” Waiting is not easy. We live in a world where we want everything immediately. But God sometimes makes us wait. Waiting can teach us patience. Waiting can deepen our faith. Waiting can make us depend more completely on God. Waiting can change our character. Sometimes we pray, “Lord, change my situation,” but God begins by changing me. We may ask God to remove a difficult person, but God may teach us patience. We may ask God to change our circumstances, but God may teach us faith. We may ask God to give us something immediately, but God may prepare us to receive it at the right time. Romans 12:12 says, “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” That is a beautiful description of Christian life: hope, patience and prayer. Persistent prayer does not mean that every prayer will receive exactly the answer we desire. It means that we continue to trust the God who knows what is best. The apostle Paul himself prayed three times about his “thorn in the flesh.” God did not remove it in the way Paul requested. Instead, God told him, “My grace is sufficient for you.” - 2 Corinthians 12:9. Sometimes God’s answer is yes. Sometimes God’s answer is wait. Sometimes God’s answer is no. But God’s grace is always sufficient.

Persistent Prayer Produces a Life of Love and Service

Romans 12 does not separate prayer from practical Christian living. After speaking about faith and spiritual gifts, Paul tells believers to love sincerely, honour one another, share with those in need, practise hospitality and remain faithful in prayer. This is important. Prayer should change the way we live. If we pray for our family, we should also love our family. If we pray for our neighbours, we should also help our neighbours. If we pray for the poor, we should also share with the poor. If we pray for our church, we should also serve the church. If we pray for someone who is suffering, perhaps God wants us to become part of the answer to that person’s prayer. Persistent prayer opens our eyes to God’s work around us. Hannah prayed, waited and trusted God. The widow persisted until justice was done. The psalmist waited for the Lord. Paul called the Church to be faithful in prayer and love. All these passages tell us the same thing: Do not give up praying.

Conclusion

Dear brothers and sisters, perhaps today you are carrying a prayer that has not yet been answered. Do not lose heart. Keep praying. Keep trusting. Keep coming to God. The answer may not come according to your timetable, but God has not forgotten you. Hannah went to the Lord with tears and came away with renewed hope. The widow continued to knock on the door of the judge. The

psalmist waited for the Lord. Jesus told His disciples to “always pray and not give up.” Your prayer may be only a few words: “Lord, help me.” “Lord, heal me.” “Lord, save my child.” “Lord, provide for my family.” “Lord, give me strength.” Even a simple prayer offered in faith is precious before God. And remember: the greatest answer to prayer is not simply receiving something from God. The greatest blessing is knowing God Himself. So, brothers and sisters, do not give up. Pray when you are happy. Pray when you are sad. Pray when you understand. Pray when you do not understand. Pray when the answer comes quickly. Pray when you have to wait. Because our God hears the cry of His children. Let us hold on to the words of Jesus: “They should always pray and not give up.” May our homes become houses of prayer, our families become families of prayer, and our churches become praying churches. And may we discover, again and again, that God hears persistent prayer.

Concluding Prayer

Gracious and loving Heavenly Father, We come before You today believing that You hear the prayers of Your children. Thank You because we do not pray to a distant or uncaring God. You are our loving Father, and You know our needs even before we speak. Lord, we bring before You all those who are carrying burdens today. Some are praying for healing. Some are praying for their children. Some are praying for their marriages and families. Some are praying for employment and financial needs. Some are praying for peace in their homes. Some are carrying secret burdens that nobody else knows. Lord, hear their prayers. Give them the faith of Hannah, who poured out her heart before You. Give them the persistence of the widow who refused to give up. Give them the patience of the psalmist who waited for You. When the answer is delayed, keep us from becoming discouraged. When we do not understand Your ways, help us to trust Your wisdom. When the answer is different from what we expected, give us the grace to accept Your will. Teach us not only to pray for ourselves but also to pray for others. Make us instruments of Your love, compassion and healing. Help us to be “faithful in prayer,” as Your Word teaches us. Above all, help us to trust Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray and never give up. We place our families, our future, our needs and our unanswered prayers into Your hands. We believe that You hear us, You love us, and You will never abandon us. In the precious and powerful name of Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.