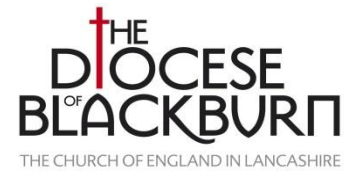


# WEEKLY SERMON

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## Persistence in prayer

My favourite film as a child was Jurassic Park.

I was the perfect age to be gripped by what became the highest grossing film of all time (at the time) when it was released in 1993.

I'm pretty sure I contributed to the film's success after nagging and nagging my parents which resulted in us going to the cinema **three** times to see it. Even then, I couldn't wait to spend my pocket money on a copy of the VHS (video tape) as soon as it was available to purchase.

If you're familiar with the Jurassic Park franchise, you'll know that in recent years there has been a reboot and the latest film (Jurassic World Dominion) was released in June.

A few nights ago, we decided as a family to sit down and watch it.

So, we picked up the remote control and after a click or two of the buttons the film was downloaded within seconds and available to view without us having to leave the comfort of our living room.

This prompted me to reflect on how much had changed since the release of that first Jurassic Park film. Back in the 90s, I'd had to endure the long wait (more than 12 months) before the film came out on video; first as a rental and then finally to purchase.

Since then, the gap between cinema release and being able to access a movie to watch at home has gradually decreased and now, here we are living in a world where just a few short weeks after the premiere, a film can be accessed almost instantly from the television set in our homes.

When we consider examples like this, it's no wonder that as a society we are so impatient – we've become so used to instant gratification.

We can access information instantly online; we can purchase things at the touch of a button and it arrives within hours; we can reach out to people via social media and can swiftly connect with them wherever they are in the world.

In the Bible passage for this coming Sunday, Jesus tells the story of a persistent widow, who regularly came to the judge begging for him to listen to her (Luke 18:1-8).

For some time, the judge refused to hear her but eventually, he grew tired of the woman's persistence and ruled in the widow's favour, just so he could get rid of her.

The parable shows us that as the widow didn't lose heart and kept returning to the judge, we must keep going to God in prayer.

I wonder how often, due to our impatience and culture of immediacy, we give up on something we have been praying for because God appears not to answer us?

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After all, we know that God is listening, and we don't need to persuade or convince him to respond, so why should we need to keep asking?

But Jesus tells us that this shouldn't be our attitude. Being persistent in prayer shows our commitment.

I'm sure you've witnessed a child asking for the same thing again and again. We know that when that relentless persistence continues for not just a few hours, but goes on for weeks and months, that they have a genuine, heartfelt desire for something.

Our persistent prayers are acts of faithfulness to God and to one another as we lift each other up in prayer; as we seek for justice through prayer; as we hold up the suffering in prayer.

Are we able to keep the needs of others and our world on our hearts for more than just a few minutes?

Or have we forgotten or given up on our prayers moments after they've passed our lips?

I know that God hasn't forgotten the things that we pray about so let's be reminded to persist with our prayers and have an absolute trust that God will answer them as things align with His perfect timing.

**Sarah Earnshaw, Children's Work Advisor, Diocesan Board of Education**