



God of justice and blessing, give us faith to know that we can come to you with our requests, and wisdom to know what we need, that we may persist in asking for justice on earth, and receive your blessing now and in all eternity. Amen.

How to keep faith in a wobbling world

Part 7 – accept help

by Caroline Hodgson

Even Jesus allowed Simon of Cyrene to help carry his cross. In some ways it's easy to be a helper – but to be helped? For many people it's quite out of the question. Often we struggle on, trying to bear our burdens alone, relying solely on our own resources. Learning to ask for and accept help is a real faith challenge and has numerous benefits. Allowing others to

support us enables God to work through them and strengthens the bonds between us.

So when the world is wobbling, pray for guidance and ask whether you need to ask for help. See it not as a sign of weakness, but as an expression of humility and trust in God's provision, showing our willingness to turn to our community when we need to.

"Bear one another's burdens," says St Paul to the Galatians (6:2) "and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ." 🌸

Getting what we want

Gillian Cooper *reflects on* Luke 18:1-8

All parents know how children can pester. And they also know the relief of giving in and letting them have whatever they're after for the sake of a bit of peace. The story Jesus tells in our reading from Luke imagines God as an exasperated parent, giving the children what they want. But of course there's more to it than that. The issue here is not biscuits or sweets, but justice. That is what the widow in the story wants, that is what God is being pestered for, and so that is what God is willing to give. But is that all?

Our Old Testament reading tells of Jacob wrestling with God all night, even after he's injured. He doesn't want justice. Justice for him would involve punishment for all his cheating and conniving. He wants, and gets, a blessing and also a new name, Israel – the name that he will pass on to his descendants, God's people.

We may think we want justice, our just deserts, but what we need is a blessing, and the name God gives us, God's children, despite our faults and failings. "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" Faith to pester God not for what we want, but for what we need? 🌸

Walking with Rosie

by Gillian Cooper

We park by the village hall and walk up the lane and through the woods. The sun shines through leaves turning gold and brown, and the river bubbles alongside us. The peace is broken only by the post van and a horse box – we stand on the verge and wave. Back in the village, I notice a sign: "Somerset Art Weeks" it says, with an arrow pointing to the hall. Rosie is allowed in with me to view the work of local

artists. There are paintings and drawings of local scenes, wood carving and metalwork, and delicate silver jewellery.

I buy some cards to take home, and go next door to the shop/café for coffee and cake. I am conscious of having experienced the beauty of creation in different forms: in nature, in art and craft, and not least in baking, as God generously allows us to share in enhancing the beauty of our world. 🌸

“God is a refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

Psalms 46:1