

How Long? Reading and Prayer

Today during the Day of Justice, we reflect on our world and the events of 2020. People experiencing the impacts of Racism, Covid-19, Poverty, disease, and natural disaster...it seems overwhelming and we, like David in Psalm 13 and Habbakkuk, ask, "How Long?"

(From Psalm 13:1-2 and Habbakkuk 1:2-3)

How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long must I wrestle with my thoughts

And day after day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

How long, Lord, must I call for help?

Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save?

Why do you make me look at injustice?

Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?

All: How long, O Lord?

(The reading can use one reader or multiple readers each reading one line. Follow with prayers of intercession.*)

How long before we are free from illness and pain?

How long before vaccines are available?

How long before governments rule justly?

How long before racism is ended?

How long must I feel like a lone voice against injustice?

How long before strife in family and friendships cease?

How long will the disparity between the rich and poor be accepted?

How long must I live with this guilt and shame?

How long before fewer children die each day?

How long must women be made into sexual objects?

How long before the world is suicide-free?

How long until the church finally lives your call to justice?

All: How long before peace and joy rule in every heart?

How long before justice rolls?

(strongly) How long, O Lord?

Prayers of Intercession (One person prays the request, all pray in silence, then all respond with O Lord, hear our prayer.)

Look on us and answer, Lord my God.

Give light to our eyes....(Psalm 13:3)

We pray for those who suffer with illness and pain, we especially pray for those facing COVID 19, bring comfort and cures **O Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for brothers and sisters living in places of war and terror, bring peace. . . . **O Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for justice, equality, and equity, that the voices of all people might be heard, for the dismantling of oppression and abuse. . . . **O Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for families living in hardship, that broken relationships might be mended and hurtful pasts resolved. . . . **O Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for the disaster and turmoil in our world, for countries and people ravaged by poverty and death. . . . **O Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for your church, that barriers might be broken, that unity and truth might prevail. Empower us, Lord, to be witnesses in your world, **O Lord, hear our prayer.**

As we pray for our broken world,
We're tempted to plead, "when will you fix everything?
When will your kingdom come? Your will be done?
When will justice be restored?"

In your word you ask us to wait on you. BUT How Long O Lord?

God too asks us "How long?"
How long before you give freedom to my people?
How long before you stop grumbling and complaining and trust in me?
How long will you sit on the fence before you live like you believe in me?
How long will you care more about things than people, money than me?

**So in obedience to you, we wait for You to make all things new.
And until that day, we wait...but not as passive bystanders.
Transform us into alert and active justice seekers.**

Show us where and how you are acting,
So we can join you in what you are already doing, ahead of us, despite us, for us.
Open our eyes to see who you are,
So we catch Your Spirit and see others for who you created them to be.

**We commit to trusting in you.
We trust in your unfailing love;
Our hearts rejoice in your salvation.
We will sing the Lord's praise,
For he has been good to us. (Psalm 13:5-6)
We will rejoice in the Lord, and be joyful in God our Savior.(Habbakkuk 3:18)**

Lord, we long for justice!

**Teach us not to seek quick fixes, but to work for transformation.
Forgive our arrogance and help us to listen to you and one another.**

**Restore your kingdom in our lives, neighborhoods, and world, so that we may know you more, trust you more, serve you more fully.
Fill us with renewed strength so that we are drawn into your justice.**

All God's beautiful children together say - **AMEN.**

(Scripture references: Exodus 10, Numbers 14, I Kings, Psalm 4, Psalm 13)
(*Sections of the Reading adapted from Rev. Dr. Joan DeVries)

Song 1: How much Longer, Written by Art Hooker (BMI), Courtney Orlando (ASCAP), Ben Hardesty (BMI) © 2018 Common Hymnal Digital (BMI)

[Chord Chart](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdsP-EQ6zHU>

Song 2: Psalm 13, Brian Doerksen

<https://www.praisecharts.com/songs/details/72727/how-long-psalm-13-sheet-music>

<https://worshipchords.com/psalm-13-how-long-chords/>

For an additional Song: Let Justice Roll, Sojourn Music

<https://sojournmusic.bandcamp.com/track/let-justice-roll>

<https://mysonginthenight.com/wp-content/uploads/Let-Justice-Roll-UPDATED.pdf>