

**Read: James 5:7-11**

## I'm Too Busy to be Patient

### **James 5:7,8**

Therefore, brothers, be patient until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the valuable harvest from the ground, patiently waiting for it, until it receives the early and late rain. You be patient too. Strengthen your hearts because the coming of the Lord is near.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

It's a joke that your pastor has probably heard a few times, the kind of joke that is funny enough to tell at a potluck—and true enough to mention in a sermon: “Be careful when you pray for patience. The last time I prayed for patience, I got stuck in a traffic jam for two hours!”

Patience doesn't come naturally for any of us. We know what we want, and when we want it:

- If we're meeting friends at the park, I want to go—*now!* And I don't need a nap.
- Do you open the microwave when there are five seconds left rather than wait for it to beep?
- When you're in line at a store, do you scan the lines to see which one is moving quicker and wish you had picked that one?

Patience. We learn patience in everyday life, and God uses the time of Advent to teach us patience. Advent is the time of waiting for Christmas—the time of patiently waiting for our celebration of Christ's birth. We wait, patiently, as we look forward to God's promises fulfilled.

Doesn't that describe our Christian life?

We patiently wait for God to do everything that he has promised to do. We humbly bow our heads and set aside our schedule; we admit that God knows better than we do, that God's timing is better than ours, and that we simply wait for God to do everything he has promised.

That's exactly what James talks about in our second reading: “Therefore, brothers, be patient until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the valuable harvest from the ground, patiently waiting for it, until it receives the early and late rain. You be patient too. Strengthen your hearts because the coming of the Lord is near.”

Patience doesn't come naturally—not to any of us. But patience is exactly what God gives. Patience is the attitude of faith that recognizes: It might not come on my schedule, or in exactly the way I had hoped—but I have a Lord who has promised me everything that I need, at the best time and in the best way possible. He has proven it in the past with the coming of his Son;

he teaches me patience today as we await Christmas; and together, the Christian Church waits patiently for Christ's return.

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- What's something that you have to wait for?
- How can waiting for something be a good thing?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Why do you think that most people aren't very patient?
- Think of a farmer who plants a field of corn or wheat. Why does he have to be patient? What will happen if he isn't patient?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- How can we practice more patience (or learn more patience) in our family?
- Think of the Fourth Petition to the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." How does God both *teach* and *give* patience in this petition?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, teach me patience—and teach me to trust your timing in all things, even as we look forward to the celebration of your birth. Amen.