



# Just Prayer and Spirituality Extras

## 2: Personal reflection

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### Reading: The sound of justice

One day as Nasreddin the Judge was walking through the forest, he came upon a peasant cutting wood. It was hard, heavy work and every blow of the axe on the wood block took all the force the peasant could muster. As he watched he heard someone saying “Hunh!” every time the axe came down on the wood. There on a log sat the woodcutter’s companion. And faithfully, with every blow, he said, “Hunh!” Nasreddin wondered at this, but he went on his way without saying any thing.

In a few days, the peasant went to the bazaar with his load of wood and sold it for a fair sum in coins. As he slipped the coins into his pocket, his companion rushed up. “Half of that money is mine!” he insisted. “I did half of the work.”

Astonished, the woodcutter debated the matter. Clearly, this was a case to be brought to the judge. Carefully, Nasreddin listened to both sides of the case. Then he asked the woodcutter to lay the coins on a stone. One by one, Nasreddin dropped the coins on the stone. As they rang out with a jingle, he said to the companion, “Do you hear this?”

“Yes” the companion answered.

“Fine,” said the judge, “The sound is yours, and the coin is the woodcutter’s.”

When the coins were all sounded and turned over to the woodcutter, Nasreddin dismissed the case.

*Quoted in Prayer without Borders*

### Reflection

- Consider the hard, physical labour that goes into providing the goods and services that we often take for granted.
- Who builds and repairs the infrastructure, cleans the buildings, stocks the shelves, plants and harvests the food, makes the clothes?
- Who tends to receive more compensation, those who do the hardest work or those who oversee it?

### Action

- Make a special effort – a commitment to notice, greet and pray for those whose physical labour contributes so much to your wellbeing.



### Story: The merchant

Someone came to a merchant to tell him that the market where he had a shop had burned down. The merchant panicked and immediately ran to see what had happened in the market.

On the way he met a friend who had just been to the market. He said, "Your shop alone is standing. It was not caught by the fire, but the other shops have burned down." The merchant said, "Thank you God!"

After some time the merchant passed away. One night his son dreamed about him. In the dream the son saw his father suffering and asked him the reason for that.

His father answered, "My Son, when people told me that our shop didn't burn down. I thanked God as if I did not care about other people."

*Ali Kasum, Macedonia, quoted in Prayer without Borders*

### Reflection

It is not uncommon on hearing stories of others' difficulties and misfortune, for people to respond in appreciation for all they themselves have.

However, genuine gratitude is a very humble response, one which recognises that what we have never comes solely from our own efforts.

### Action

- Make a list of all you are grateful for. As you reflect on each item, ask God how you might use that gift in service to others.