

## A Woman's Place

...a place of justice and equality...

*A reading based on the widow and the unrighteous judge from Luke 18:1-8, as well as on the lives of women around our world whose persistence in the face of many obstacles is inspirational as well as critical for bringing change—and justice—to their communities.*

Bailiff: Your honor, could I trouble you a moment?

Judge: (without looking up) Yes, what is it bailiff.

B: She's back.

J: (still distracted) Who's back?

B: That woman.

J: (with a bit of irritation) You mean the one from yesterday?

B: Yes, and the day before. And last week—and the week before. Well, she actually started coming a few months back....

J: Doesn't she see I'm busy! I mean, she has all day with nothing better to do than gather wood and get water and take care of the children and work in the fields and fix meals for her husband and go to the market and tend the animals and sew clothes and attend prayer services—while we men... (pauses)...well, we're occupied with the really important things.

B: She says this is important.

J: And what is "this"?

B: She says it's a matter of justice.

J: Justice! I *am* the justice in this town!

B: She said you wouldn't know justice if it 'spit in your eye'.

J: Bailiff!

B: Just quoting, sir.

J: And I guess *she* knows anything about justice...?!

B: (rapidly) Well, she did mention something about the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women—and its Optional Protocol; the Millennium Development Goals—and particularly the sections on gender equality and empowerment; and even brought in the Universal Declaration Human Rights as it pertains to women's status.

J: (angrily, leaning toward bailiff) Is that all?!

B: (a bit fearfully) The ILO Convention on workers' rights and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

J: Lord, have mercy.

B: That's what she said—speaking of you...your honor...she also quoted scripture.

J: Dragging the Bible into this—that's the last straw! We have to get rid of her—she's making a mockery of this court.

B: If you'll pardon me sir, she said you'd already done that... Just quoting again, sir...

J: Well, I guess if I hear her out, it will get her off my back. Do you think her case has any merit?

B: I wouldn't bet against her, sir.

J: Frankly, bailiff—at this point, neither would I. Send her in.