



# 16 DAYS

**13 - 28 MAY**

A COMMON GRACE  
PRAYER CAMPAIGN  
AGAINST DOMESTIC &  
FAMILY VIOLENCE



**DAY 1**  
16 DAYS OF PRAYER  
AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



*He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.'* - Luke 1:52

*'Do not keep talking so proudly or let your mouth speak such arrogance, for the LORD is a God who knows, and by him deeds are weighed. The bows of the warriors are broken, but those who stumbled are armed with strength.'*  
- 1 Samuel 2:3-4

*'It is not by strength that one prevails; those who oppose the LORD will be broken.'* - 1 Samuel 2:9-10



**READ:**  
**Day One 13th May, 2024**



**PRAY**

God of the universe, you are unchanging in your goodness. And because your purposes do not change, because they remain good, we trust you to change what seems unchangeable. We ask that you will bring about a reordering of this world, that those who misuse their power will be brought low, and that those who have been made low will be raised up. God, we thank you that because you will do these things, we can face even the most painful of realities. Please use these next 16 days to make us people who pray and act with hope. Amen.

**GO DEEPER** If you would like to know more about Domestic and Family Violence, and what resources there are for dealing with it, go to [www.saferresource.org.au](http://www.saferresource.org.au)



## DAY 2

16 DAYS OF PRAYER

AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



*"Woe to him who piles up stolen goods and makes himself wealthy by extortion! How long must this go on?' Will not your creditors suddenly arise? Will they not wake up and make you tremble? Then you will become their prey. Because you have plundered many nations, the peoples who are left will plunder you. For you have shed human blood; you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.*

*"Woe to him who builds his house by unjust gain, setting his nest on high to escape the clutches of ruin! You have plotted the ruin of many peoples, shaming your own house and forfeiting your life. The stones of the wall will cry out, and the beams of the woodwork will echo it.*

*"Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town by injustice! The violence you have done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, and your destruction of animals will terrify you. For you have shed human blood; you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them."*

*- Habakkuk 2:6b-12,17 (NIV)*



### **READ:**

**Day two 14th May, 2024 The Violence Embedded in the Landscape**

### **ASK:**

We can't look at contemporary Australia, without looking at the patterns of violence embedded in Australia's history. What does this awareness of our past raise for you in reflecting on the current challenge of domestic and family violence today?



### **PRAY:**

Creator Spirit, help us to connect with the pain in the land, the waters, the peoples. Through connecting with the pain may we find truth and through truth may we find justice and through justice may we find hope. Jesus, you are the great comforter and we cling to you in our hurt from the pain, in our discomfort of the truth and the reality, and in our hope for healing. Help us to see, hear, listen, feel, and act as we seek you through the violence embedded in the landscape of these lands now called Australia.

### **GO DEEPER:**

If you are keen to learn more about Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander justice issues and the true history of this land now called Australia, one of the best first steps is to watch the SBS Series [First Australians](#). Another is to read Bruce Pascoe's *Dark Emu*.

## DAY 3

### 16 DAYS OF PRAYER AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



#### **'Luke 10:25-37 The Parable of the Good Samaritan**

*'On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"*

*"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"*

*He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'"*

*"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."*

*But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"*

*In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'*

*"Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"*

*The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."*

*Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."*



#### **READ:**

#### **Day three 15th May, 2024 Structures of Violence**

#### **Ask**

What might it look like to support an individual experiencing injustice, and what does it look like to challenge a system that produces injustice?

What are some of the things that make it hard to see structural oppression?



#### **Pray**

*Father, bind up the wounds of the broken-hearted. Help us tend the hurting and broken. (You may wish to name those close to you who are broken-hearted, hurting and broken right now) We lament and cry out against the structures that produce consistent injustice. Make us people of transformation, working for the restructuring of systems of violence. (You may wish to name those contexts that you are in that you feel need to be transformed) Send us out today in your strength and with your tender care we pray, Amen.*

#### **Go Deeper**

If you would like to explore your church's culture of power, this article will point you to some helpful questions to

ask: [https://www.commongrace.org.au/what\\_is\\_your\\_churchs\\_culture\\_of\\_power](https://www.commongrace.org.au/what_is_your_churchs_culture_of_power)



# DAY 4

## 16 DAYS OF PRAYER AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



*'So God created mankind in his own image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them'*  
- Genesis 1:27 (NIV)

*The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."  
Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."*



### **READ:**

**Day four 16th May, 2024 The Centrality of the Image of God**

### **Ask**

How familiar are you with the idea that God is represented or 'imaged' by humanity? For you, how much does each of the two parties (men and women) figure in this? In what ways does domestic and family violence warp or obscure the image of God? In what ways have you seen the image of God come through more brightly and clearly through women being honoured? God's reputation is bound up in the dignity of women. Is this how you see it? How might God want to change the way you see things on this?



### **Pray**

A prayer of thanksgiving:

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, how amazing that you have made us in your image. We praise you for giving each of us dignity, value and purpose through that. We marvel that you are mindful of us, that you care for us (Psalm 8).

A prayer of repentance:

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we grieve that we have not always recognised your image in the people you have made. We have let prejudice cloud our vision. We have not treated all people - men and women - as equally valuable, and we have not equally dignified them. We are sorry. We commit now to honouring each person, and you through them.

### **Go Deeper**

Understanding what the Bible says about faith issues that relate to domestic violence is a key step for any churches engaging in this area, read more at [https://www.saferresource.org.au/the\\_bible\\_on\\_domestic\\_family\\_violence](https://www.saferresource.org.au/the_bible_on_domestic_family_violence).



**DAY 5**  
16 DAYS OF PRAYER  
AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



*"For the Lord will not forsake his people;  
he will not abandon his heritage;  
for justice will return to the righteous,  
and all the upright in heart will follow it."  
- Psalm 94:14-15*



**READ:**  
**Day five 17th May, 2024 Following Justice**



**Pray**

*Holy Spirit, would you bring revelation and understanding on just how deep this issue is of gendered violence for First Nations peoples across this nation of Australia? May mainstream Australia come to understand the drivers of violence for First Nations peoples and that First Nations Peoples would be supported in their/our God given ministries that we know will bring healing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.*

**Go Deeper**

Here are some potential ways to take action or read more on the topic or other interesting links.

See Our Watch's national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children. Sono Leone was one of the Advisory Board developing this resource: <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do/Prevention-of-violence-against-Aboriginal-and-Torr>

Become a friend of Strong Women Talking on facebook and follow Sono's work: <https://www.facebook.com/Strong-Women-Talking-429166944149398/>



# DAY 6

## 16 DAYS OF PRAYER AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



*'If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.*

*Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*

*Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.'*

*- Matthew 18:15-20: 15*



### **READ:**

#### **Day Six 18th May, 2024 How did this happen in our midst?**

### **Ask**

The Australian Church must keep asking 'how did domestic and family violence happen in our midst?' How might we turn the tide? How might your church be better equipped to participate in "full spectrum" peace-making when domestic and family violence has happened in your midst?

By 'peace-building' (or negotiation, where there is cooperation and no third party)

By 'peace-making' (or, mediation and dialogue, where there is cooperation with a third party)

By 'peace-keeping' (or, arbitration which is lacking cooperation and requires a third party) or

By 'peace-waging' (or, nonviolent struggle where there is non-cooperation and no third party). [4]



### **Pray**

Pray for ourselves and the Australian church the Prayer of Saint Francis

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:*

*where there is hatred, let me sow love;*

*where there is injury, pardon;*

*where there is doubt, faith;*

*where there is despair, hope;*

*where there is darkness, light;*

*where there is sadness, joy.*

*O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek*

*to be consoled as to console,*

*to be understood as to understand,*

*to be loved as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive,*

*it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,*

*and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

*Amen.*



**DAY 7**  
16 DAYS OF PRAYER  
AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



*'Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.'*  
- Proverbs 3:5



**READ:**

**Day Seven 19th May, 2024 Designing Kingdom Impact**



**Pray**

Take time today to reflect and pray through how the church in Australia is being called to be an advocate in this moment. What would a courageous, convicted and compassionate church look like? How is God calling you to be part of the response to domestic & family violence in your context?

*Amen.*



# DAY 8

## 16 DAYS OF PRAYER AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



*'It happened, late one afternoon, when David rose from his couch and was walking about on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; the woman was very beautiful. David sent someone to inquire about the woman. It was reported, 'This is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite.' So David sent messengers to fetch her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she was purifying herself after her period.) Then she returned to her house. The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, 'I am pregnant.'*

- 2 Samuel 11:2-5



### **READ:**

**Day Eight 20th May, 2024 A Church That Destroys**

### **Ask**

- What are new elements that you notice about the story of David and Bathsheba when you read it this time?
- What are the wrong stories you've been told about women and how might that influence how you receive the testimony of a woman?
- What are practical ways in which you can listen and learn from more true stories like Bathsheba's?



### **Pray**

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, until the destroying storms pass by.

I cry to God Most High, to God who fulfils his purpose for me.

He will send from heaven and save me, he will put to shame those who trample on me. God will send forth his steadfast love and his faithfulness. - Psalm 57:1-3

Lord, today we ask you to open our eyes to see violence, help us listen and learn from true stories. Thank you that you do not forget those who are oppressed or terrified, who are in trouble or grief. Please draw near to those in trouble today. Amen.

### **Go Deeper**

This article by Tamie Davis might assist you in your reading of 2 Samuel 11-12:

<http://www.fixinghereyes.org/single-post/2018/09/15/Why-David-and-Bathsheba-is-not-about-adultery>



# DAY 9

## 16 DAYS OF PRAYER AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



*"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."*  
- Romans 12:9-12



### **READ:**

**Day Nine 21st May, 2024 A Church That Heals**

### **Ask**

- What challenges you about Romans 12:9-12? Which of Paul's instructions is your least practiced?
- Why do we find it hard to hate what is evil? What does it look like to hate evil?
- What is a realistic action you can take in the next few months that expresses your hate for gender-based violence?



### **Pray**

God of sincere love,  
we thank you for the healing that we/some of us have received from you, amongst your people. We grieve - on our own behalf, or on behalf of others - the times where this has not been the case. Make our churches places where we hate what is evil, and cling to what is good, and are wise enough to distinguish which is which. You are devoted to your church, and to us. We thank you for that. Make us joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer.  
Amen.

### **Go Deeper**

Read this article for more steps church members and leaders can take to participate in God's healing for survivors:

[https://www.commongrace.org.au/10\\_things\\_that\\_will\\_need\\_to\\_change](https://www.commongrace.org.au/10_things_that_will_need_to_change)



# DAY 10

## 16 DAYS OF PRAYER

### AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



*'Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.'*

- Ephesians 4:31-32



#### **READ:**

**Day 10 | 22nd May, 2024 forgiveness**

#### **Ask**

- How are we speaking about forgiveness in our churches? What might people in our congregations be hearing in the way we talk about it?
- How seriously are we treating issues of safety and wellbeing? Is our desire to see reconciliation potentially encouraging people to remain in or return to harm?
- In what ways might God be calling us to repent of harm to which we may have unintentionally contributed? What might this repentance look like in practical terms?
- How might we begin to challenge the 'cheap forgiveness' that has so often been preached and modelled in our churches?



#### **Pray**

God, we give you thanks for your costly, loving, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus that offered forgiveness to us. God we ask for your forgiveness over our complicity in domestic and family violence. Help us to see clearly where we have gone wrong, and how it might be made right. Help us to value safety and wellbeing, and to pursue justice.

Today, we lift to you all those who want to change. May your Spirit work within them to bring repentance and healing and a deep and genuine change in the way they treat others. May they yield to your justice, placing themselves in positions of accountability and limited power as a means of practically working out repentance and change.

For those of us who have been wronged, where the repentance of our abuser is genuine, and in your own good and gentle timing, give us grace to forgive. Give us wisdom, and protect us from unwise counsel, about what reconciliation - if any - is appropriate. Relieve us from the burden of offering cheap forgiveness - of papering over an unacknowledged wrong. You are the God of truth and justice and mercy. We trust in you.

#### **Go Deeper**

What can your church do to become a safer church?

Check out <https://www.saferresource.org.au/> to find out more.

See especially

[https://www.saferresource.org.au/the\\_bible\\_on\\_domestic\\_family\\_violence](https://www.saferresource.org.au/the_bible_on_domestic_family_violence) for more on Christian forgiveness.



# DAY 11

16 DAYS OF PRAYER  
AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



*"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour."*

- Isaiah 61: 1-3



## **READ:**

**Day 11 | 23rd May, 2024 Beauty to Ashes**

## **Ask**

Where do you need to believe again that God's restorative healing power could be at work in yourself and your community?

Where do you need to name again the brokenness of your heart and your community?

What might it look like for you to:

- Acknowledge your own brokenness first?
- To start conversations with humility rather than a superhero cape?
- To come with questions rather than answers?
- To commit to serve in collaboration with others rather than seeking to build our own status, empire or story?



## **Pray**

Jesus,  
you declared that you were the one who came to proclaim good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, and sight for the blind, and to set the oppressed free. May we see this in our lives, and in our churches. Help us acknowledge our brokenness. Help us listen with humility. Help us to collaborate for the greater good. Please be at work through your people that beauty and joy may abound.  
Amen.

## **Go Deeper**

There is great power in acknowledging that we have much to learn. ANROWS has a number of great resources to help you learn more:

<https://www.anrows.org.au/resources/>



# DAY 12

## 16 DAYS OF PRAYER AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



'Fear not,  
For I am with you;  
Be not dismayed, for I am your God;  
I will strengthen you,  
I will help you;  
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'  
- Isaiah 41:10



### **READ:**

**Day 12 | 24th May, 2024 | Our Refuge**

### **Ask**

Is God your safe Father? What barriers or memories do you suspect make it difficult for you to relate to him in this way?



### **Pray**

Psalms 5, 91, and 121 all describe God's love, care and protection, especially in the face of evil and danger.

***Psalm 5:11 'But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.'***

***Psalm 91:4 'He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.'***

***Psalm 121:1-2 'I lift up my eyes to the mountains - where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.'***

Sometimes this care is evident. At other times, we cannot understand why God does not act more clearly for our protection. Perhaps take some time to read through one or two of the Psalms listed here. You might want to thank God for the ways you have seen him doing what the Psalms describe, or you might use the Psalms to prompt cries of lament, crying out for God to act powerfully for you, or for those in need:

***Psalm 5:1-2 'Listen to my words, LORD, consider my lament. Hear my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray.'***

A prayer for those navigating justice and support services:

Our Heavenly Father,

Keep us safe.

Help all those who have courageously left abusive family structures.

And for those who haven't, give them strength.

God we ask you to move your mighty hand in the current services (police, family law court, legal services, community services, churches) to assist them in giving a voice to the many women and men in domestic violence, especially the children, who are so vulnerable.

Let your light expose the deeds of darkness within this complex area so that lives may be rebuilt and only safe families restored.

We also pray that our Government would respectfully listen and implement the numerous recommendations from the Family Law Reform Commission to protect abused women and children. Align their priorities with yours, God.

God we pray for your will to be done, especially for children.

In Jesus' name.

Amen



# DAY 13

## 16 DAYS OF PRAYER AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



'On the fourth day they got up early and he prepared to leave, but the woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh your heart with something to eat; then you can go." So the two of them sat down to eat and drink together. Afterward the woman's father said, "Please stay tonight and refresh your heart." And when the man got up to go, his father-in-law persuaded him, so he stayed there that night. On the morning of the fifth day, when he rose to go, the woman's father said, "Refresh your heart. Wait till afternoon!" So the two of them ate together.'

- Judges 19:5-8



### **READ:**

**Day 13 | 25th May, 2024 | God's Attention**

### **Ask**

Open your eyes to see how women are abused in your context? Where is there silencing, exclusion, dismissal? How can you be an antidote?

Open your eyes to see how women are noticed in your context? Where is there welcome, valuing, listening? How can you further encourage this?



### **Pray**

*El Roi - the God who sees - it is painful for us to see what you see. To know that part of the history of your people is the abuse of women made in your image. But we also thank you that you do not allow us to deceive ourselves about this.*

*Even more than that, we thank you that you do see everything - even the things that are hidden or dismissed or twisted by liars.*

*Open our eyes to see like you - to stand, to listen, to speak and to cry with those who are abused. Help us to treasure your image in each other.*

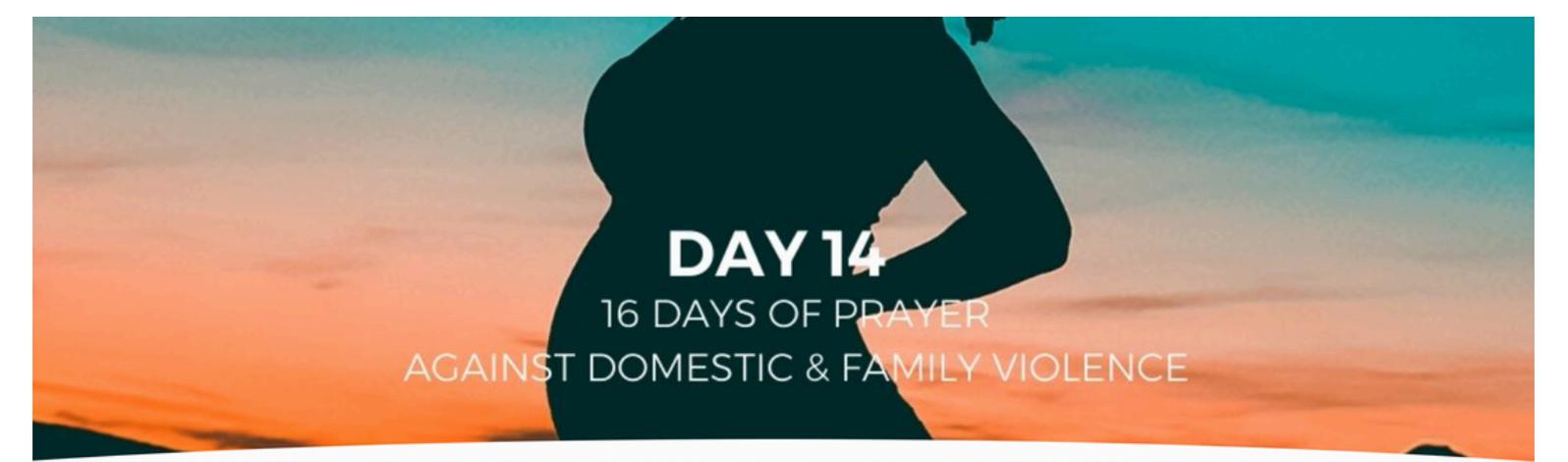
*Amen.*

### **Go Deeper**

This reflection is drawn from a sermon Erica preached earlier this year. Find it [here](#) to think more about this challenging passage.

Interested in what the Bible says about domestic and family violence? Read more here:

[https://www.saferresource.org.au/the\\_bible\\_on\\_domestic\\_family\\_violence](https://www.saferresource.org.au/the_bible_on_domestic_family_violence)



# DAY 14

## 16 DAYS OF PRAYER AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



*'On the fourth day they got up early and he prepared to leave, but the woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh your heart with something to eat; then you can go." So the two of them sat down to eat and drink together. Afterward the woman's father said, "Please stay tonight and refresh your heart." And when the man got up to go, his father-in-law persuaded him, so he stayed there that night. On the morning of the fifth day, when he rose to go, the woman's father said, "Refresh your heart. Wait till afternoon!" So the two of them ate together.'*

- Judges 19:5-8



### **READ:**

#### **Day 14 | 26th May, 2024 | A Tale of Two Stories**

### **Ask**

This passage exhorts us to re-think how we understand credibility as it relates to complex matters such as gender-based violence. Though it is shocking, and contrary to God's will, of course it is possible for God's people to do horrible things to women. We see it laid out for us in Judges 19-21. Why do you think Christians are sometimes slow to believe a victim when they come forward?

This passage demonstrates that it is possible for an abusive man to manipulate a story for his own benefit, and for a faith community to be turned into a weapon.

Where do you see your/your community's vulnerability to manipulation?



### **Pray**

God of truth, shine light on the truth so that it might be what we see and believe. Keep us from being deceived and manipulated.

God, thank you that you do not forget those who are oppressed or terrified, that are in trouble or grief. Please draw near to those in trouble today and provide a community for them who see and hear.

Rise up, O Lord; O God, lift up your hand; do not forget the oppressed.... you do see! Indeed you note trouble and grief, that you may take it into your hands; the helpless commit themselves to you; you have been the helper of the orphan ... Lord, you will hear the desire of the meek; you will strengthen their heart, you will incline your ear, to do justice for the orphan and the oppressed, so that those from earth may strike terror no more. Psalm 10:12,14,17-18 NRSV

God of truth, shine light on the truth so that it might be what we see and believe. Amen.

### **Go Deeper**

If you'd like to understand Judges 19-21 better, we highly recommend Jacqueline Lapsley's book, 'Whispering the Word: Hearing Women's Stories in the Old Testament.'



# DAY 16

## 16 DAYS OF PRAYER AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



*"On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath." The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?" When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.'*  
- Luke 13:10-17



**READ:**  
**Day 15 | 27th May, 2024 | The Woman Bent Down**

### Ask

The crippling of women through domestic and family violence can be more than physical, as it is for this woman. What other dimensions do you know of? How has the surrounding community been implicated in this?

In what ways can we dignify and lift up women who are surviving domestic and family violence? What expectations do you notice in the community, like those of the synagogue leader, that might prevent this from happening?

Can you foresee ways in which domestic and family violence might need to be confronted out in the open, as Jesus deals with the woman here? In what ways might it be appropriate for abusers to be brought low?



### Pray

Jesus, Lord of Lords, you are the highest and the greatest. You are worthy of all glory, love and authority. You are in very nature God, and yet you did not consider equality with God something to be used for your own advantage. Rather, you made yourself nothing, by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And you served those who had been made low. We praise you for that. We pray that we will see many raised up, to praise you again. We pray that we will see many dignified in your presence. Amen.



# DAY 16

## 16 DAYS OF PRAYER AGAINST DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE



*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!  
For your love is better than wine,  
your anointing oils are fragrant,  
your name is perfume poured out;  
therefore the maidens love you.  
Draw me after you, let us make haste.  
The king has brought me into his chambers.  
We will exult and rejoice in you;  
we will extol your love more than wine;  
rightly do they love you.'*  
- Song of Songs 1:1-4



### **READ:**

**Day 16 | 28th May, 2024 | Prevention is Better than Cure**

### **Ask**

To prevent violence, we need to know what drives it. The best social research we have tells us that the biggest driver and indicator of violence against women is gender inequality. So, let's spend some time thinking about the following:

What would it look like for women to be truly equal?

What do relationships that are characterized by equality and respect look like?

What would it look like to talk to and in our churches about gender equality, respectful relationships and preventing DFV?

Would you continue in partnering with us to do the hard but necessary work of preventing DFV?



### **Pray**

*'You keep track of all my sorrows.*

*You have collected all my tears in your bottle.*

*You have recorded each one in your book.'* – Psalm 56:8 (NLT)

*God we thank you that you give us the power to learn, grow and change.*

*Thank you for what we have learned over these last 16 days. We thank you that you have heard every one of our prayers, that they are precious to you.*

*We thank you that you pay attention to every tear we have cried because of our own suffering or that of others. We thank you that you are able to bring about change in us and the world. We pray for those we know or suspect are suffering or at risk of family and domestic violence. What would you have us do to care for them? Please show us, and help us to help them.*

*Amen.*

### **Go Deeper**

When I first started thinking through some of the questions above, I wondered what it would be like to have a Biblical example of a relationship that is characterized by equality and respect. And then it dawned on me. Song of Songs. Even just the first four verses model for us where any sexual encounter should begin: consent. The very opening line – in fact the very first word! – of Song of Songs is the woman of the Song giving consent (she does this in a Hebrew tense used for giving permission). This first poem in Song of Songs then goes on to show us a healthy, loving relationship defined by equality, mutuality, and respect. When we preach, teach and discuss Song of Songs in our churches, we have an opportunity to talk about gender equality, respectful relationships and preventing DFV.

If you'd like to know more about the work of primary prevention, head over to Our Watch and take a look at their resources.

If you'd like to know more about Song of Songs as a model for primary prevention, you can read more here.

<https://www.crucibleonline.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Sessions-Do-not-arouse-or-awaken-love-until-it-so-desires.pdf>