

Worship Resources for Domestic Violence Awareness Sunday

Compiled by Yvonne DeV Vaughn, AVA Director

Call to Worship

O Holy God, like Isaiah the prophet we stand in awe of your glory, feeling tremendously small and polluted by our sin, and the sin of our society. Even so, you touch us with your burning presence, and we are made clean and whole. O God, our Creator, continue to build this household of faith into what you want us to be. O Christ, our Savior, lead us to do as you will. O Spirit, our Power, strengthen us for the work of the Kingdom, a worship and a service which is ours today as well as tomorrow. O Blessed Trinity, fill this place and these people with your presence. For yours is the Power, and the Salvation, and the Creation, now and always. Amen.

*-- Pete Haynes, pastor
Long Green Valley Church of the Brethren*

Lament

Listen, God, to my prayer;
do not hide from my pleading;
hear me and give answer.

If an enemy had reviled me,
that I could bear;
If my foe had viewed me with contempt,
from that I could hide.
But it was you, my other self,
my comrade and friend,
You, whose company I enjoyed,
at whose side I walked
in procession in the house of God.

But I will call upon God,
and the Lord will save me.
At dusk, dawn, and noon
I will grieve and complain,
and my prayer will be heard.
(Ps 55:2-3, 13-15, 17-18)

*--When I Call For Help: A Prayer
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
www.usccb.org*

Litany of Hope

As we rejoice in hope,
let us remember our salvation:
The river of our tears
will become a well of living water.
The seed which falls into the ground
will rise and bear much fruit.

Alleluia!

The crushed and bowed down
will be lifted up in God's embrace
The dead trees of our parched life

will spring forth again in healing leaves.

Alleluia!

Our turmoil and commotion
will be held in the hollow of God's hand,
and our journey in the darkness
will be led by the flame of God's love.

Alleluia!

We are not alone.

We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses.

Amen! Amen!

By Dorothy McRae-McMahon, *Celebrations Along the Way: Liturgies for Everyday Moments* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2001), p. 16

Prayer of Confession

We surround ourselves with crosses, O God; yet we confess that we shrink back from the awareness that your glory is revealed in the criminal's cross of Jesus Christ. Help us to know your presence wherever there is suffering in our world. May we be channels of your love and healing, so that you may not suffer needlessly. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

--Ruth Duck, *Flames of the Spirit*,
The Pilgrim Press

Prayer

For the Oppressed

Look with pity, O heavenly Father, upon the people in this land who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as their constant companions. Have mercy upon us. Help us to eliminate our cruelty to these our neighbors. Strengthen those who spend their lives establishing equal protection of the law and equal opportunities for all. And grant that every one of us may enjoy a fair portion of the riches of this land; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

--*The Book of Common Prayer*

Prayer – Justice for Women

O Most Holy God, many among us fail to feel the ways in which words, titles, and phrases oppress the inner identity and emerging self of many women.

We pray that your church may be freed from insensitivity to the power of words and actions that bind women to economic injustice, sexual abuse, and emotional injury.

May we become a people who truly live out in both our actions and our language a life-style of equality, mutual respect, and appreciation for our uniqueness. Amen.

--Ruth Duck, *Flames of the Spirit*,
The Pilgrim Press

Prayer

God with us,
we have gathered with a sense
of the sacredness of this space,
aware of your presence flowing from one person to another.
We come with our wounds wide open,
with our defenses down,
wearing our personal needs like placards,
calling to you as did so many who approached Jesus,
saying "Heal me, help me, touch me!
"We work hard at being happy,
at coping, at surviving, at holding on,
but we have come here hoping to let go
and to open ourselves to Christ's healing flow.
Touch our lives, our God, as we worship here today,
and cast your sunlight through our tears till rainbows rise,
and plant dreams where wounds leave scars
like furrows in broken ground,
rekindling our hope,
reviving our strength,
refreshing our faith.
Amen.

*--Ruth Duck, Touch Holiness,
The Pilgrim Press*

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Prayer of Intercession

Lot offered his daughters to a hostile crowd to be raped;

- protect women who find themselves in defenseless situations;
- women who are victims of war and violence;

Jephthah sacrificed his only daughter to fulfill a vow;

- protect children who are victims of cults and misguided beliefs.

Tamar, the daughter of David, was raped by her half-brother;

- heal the wounds of children who have been violated by those they trusted.

To protect his male guests, the virgin daughter of an Ephraimite was given to a crowd to be abused;

- hear the cries of women who are battered and abused in their own homes.

Susanna was falsely accused of infidelity and condemned to death;

- may women's voices be heard and believed so that justice may serve them.

Prayer of Intercession

We hold before God;

Those for whom life is very difficult;
those who have difficult decisions to make, and
who honestly do not know what is the right thing to do.

We hold before God:

those who have difficult task to do and to face,
and who fear they may fail in them;
those who have difficult temptations to face, and
who know only too well that they may fall to
temptation, if they try to meet them alone.

We hold before God:

those who know that they can be their own worst enemies.

We hold before God:

those who have difficult people to work with;
those who have to suffer unjust treatment,
unfair criticism, unappreciated work.

We hold before God:

those who are sad because someone they loved has died;
and any who are disappointed in something from
which they hoped very much.

--*William Barclay, Celtic Daily Prayer, pg. 218*
Harper San Francisco

Prayer for Justice/Domestic Violence Healing

We are the church.

We offer ourselves to you, O God, our Creator.

We offer our hands.

May we use them to extend a healing touch to comfort sisters and brothers
and children, youth, and elderly who are afraid.

We offer our eyes and ears.

May we see and hear the signs and stories of violence so that all may have
someone with them in their pain and confusion.

We offer our hearts and our tears.

May the hurt and sorrow of the abused echo within us.

We offer our own stories of violence.

May we be healed as we embrace each other.

We offer our anger.

Make it a passion for justice.

We offer all our skills.

Use our gifts to end violence.

We offer our faith, our hope, our love.

May our encounters with violence bring us closer to you and to each other.

All this we ask through Jesus Christ who knows the pain of violence.

Amen.

-*The Sabbath of Domestic Peace*
www.sabbathofdomesticpeace.org

Prayer of Dedication

God, we need you.
Carry us when we're weak, hold us when we're tired.
Love us when we cannot care anymore.
And when we huddle, lonely and afraid,
cover us with your strong, protective hands,
guard our sleep,
and wake us gently in the morning,
rested and strong,
and ready to try again.
Amen.

*—adapted Catherine J. Foot,
Survivor Prayers, 1994
Westminster/John Knox Press*

Litany

Reader One:

We gather together aware of the violence around us:
the physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect of children,
including abuse by religious leaders;
the murder and beatings of women by their partners;
the forced prostitution of young women in countries all over the world.

Reader Two:

the sexual harassment of women in the workplace, including the church;
the exploitation of women and children for profit and pornography;
the rape of countless women within marriages and dating relationships;

Reader Three:

The further violence perpetrated against women in the court system;
ritual abuse and mutilation of women and children;
the atrocities suffered by the victims of war;
(The leader may invite others to name those for whom they wish to pray aloud or silently.)

ONE: In naming these forms of evil, we feel grief and pain.

ALL: Loving God, you are the one who desires that all people be brought into right relationship with one another and with you. Show us the path to justice and fill us with your healing power.

ALL: May we experience your presence among us as comforter, sustainer, and healer.

--from National Ministries ABC/USA

LITANY FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

RESPONSE: We lift them up to you, O God.

LEADER: Let us pray for our sisters and brothers who are discounted, defamed and ridiculed....

Our sisters and brothers whose gifts are denied.....

Our sisters and brothers who are experiencing the pain of family and societal violence.....

Our sisters and brothers who are economically exploited.....

Our sisters and brothers whose color, language, or other precious gifts make them targets of abuse and neglect.....

Our sisters and brothers who are not with us today.....

Sisters and brothers, we acknowledge that violence exists in families in our land, and we commit ourselves to exposing that violence and to freeing those who suffer such violence from its crippling effects. Therefore, let us pray.

For children who suffer pain, degradation, and rejection from those responsible for

their care,

Grant them safety and protection, O God.

For parents who suffer the anguish of their failures as parents,

Grant them insight and healing, O God.

For women and men who are abused and battered by those who profess to love them,

Grant them strength and courage, O God.

For women and men who batter those they love,

Grant them the repentance which can change their lives, O God.

For all those who suffer violence in their families,

Grant them love, solace and healing, O God.

For all Christians and people of good will,

Grant them openness to and compassion for those who suffer family violence, O God.

God of Love and Creator of the Universe, restore all families to your loving care.

Teach them calm strength and patient wisdom that they may overcome arrogance and division as well as anger and violence, that they may resolve conflicts without violence, and nurture one another in the spirit of love and peace. Amen.

--Adapted from *Violence In the Family: A Workshop Curriculum For Clergy and Other Helpers*, by
By Rev. Marie Fortune and members of the Center For the Prevention of
Sexual and Domestic
Violence (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1991).

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH

Leader: May the God of Sarah and Hagar, Miriam and Ruth, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus and all the saints, bless and keep you.

All: Amen.

Leader: May Jesus Christ, the Comforter and Healer, be with you.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the holiness and strength of the women in your life surround you.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the courage of the Holy Spirit be ever present to you.

All: Amen, Alleluia.

**Adapted from Violence in the Family: A Workshop Curriculum For Clergy and Other Helpers by Rev. Marie Fortune and members of the Center For the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1991)*

AFFIRMATION FOR WOMEN SURVIVORS TO TRUST AGAIN

As I learn to trust again, there is so much to learn.

God, I'm learning to trust myself. What a surprise, that there is so much inside of me to learn to trust. I'm learning to listen to me inside, to pay attention, to really hear.

I'm learning about my own wisdom, that I do know what is at the heart of me, what I want, what I feel, what I need.

God, I'm learning to trust other people. There are people in this world who do what they say they will do. I'm learning to sort through people. I'm learning the difference between

those who have hurt me and those who have not. I'm learning, gingerly, carefully, to put my weight down full on that which can hold me up.

God, I'm learning to trust you. I'm learning to put into words things I have been afraid to tell you. I'm learning that your steadfast love endures forever, that you will not abandon me, that you do not lie to me. I'm learning that you do not hurt me, call me stupid, run out of patience, forget to do what you said you would, change your mind, change the rules.

God, I'm learning to trust the truth. I'm learning its power, its freedom. I'm learning that I can speak truth, believe truth, believe me.

Amen.

*--Catherine J. Foote, Survivor Prayers
Westminster/John Knox Press*