

Healing Waters: Churches Working to End Violence Against Women

These prayers are excerpted with permission from Carol Penner, *Healing Waters: Churches Working to End Violence against Women* (Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada), pp. 147, 149.

Call to Worship

God of compassion, you feel our pain and cry with us in our Passion. God of justice, you rage with us against the injustice of our experience. Be with us today.

We gather today in sadness to remember all victims of violence, but especially those women and children who have been victims of violence in their own homes.

We come together because there is so much violence experienced by the vulnerable ones in our world; countless women, children and men.

Acknowledging the Pain/Confession

Reader One:

We gather together, aware of the violence around us;
The physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect of children;
The murder and beatings of women by their partners;
The forced prostitution of young women and men in Canada other parts of the world;

Reader Two:

The sexual harassment of women in the workplace, including the church;
The rape of countless women within marriage 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 members of the congregation to name those for whom they wish to pray for aloud or silently. Or the leader may invite the congregation to enter a period of silent meditation to reflect on abuse in their own lives.)

Reader One:

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

All:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Reader One:

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.

Prayer of Dedication

We offer ourselves to you, O God our Creator.

We offer our hands.

Use our healing touch to comfort sisters, brothers and children who are afraid.

We offer our eyes and ears. May we see and hear the signs and stories of violence,

So that all my have someone with them in their pain and confusion.

We offer our hearts and our tears as their hurt and sorrow 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.