



Justice for Women

Tapestry Thread

Devotion for Week 2 - October 9, 2022

By Sylvia Eley

In last week's devotion, we learned why the Church should care about sex trafficked victims and survivors. This week we will learn how through the Church we can combat Sex Trafficking.

Scripture calls for us to advocate on behalf of those whose voices silenced through oppression: "Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy" (Proverbs 31:8-9). The Church must intervene in every phase of the trafficking of human beings; protect them from deception and solicitation; to find and free them and assist them once they are freed. Psalm 82:3-4 reminds us, "Give justice to the poor and the orphan; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute. Rescue the poor and helpless; deliver them from the grasp of evil people." Can we eliminate human trafficking? Maybe not, but we as a Church can curb it; there are a multitude of options available for churches to use.

- **Do what we do best: pray.** February 8th is the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking, a wonderful opportunity to start. Only the power of God can end a tragedy this pervasive. Prayer and worship can be used to focus our response to the problem and, can be helpful to survivors. As churches all our works are covered by prayer.
- **Raise Awareness:** January 2023 is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, as decreed by Presidential proclamation in 2010. January is also Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Raising awareness can lead to prevention; here are a few examples:
 - Mobilize our faith communities to build awareness and to recognize and report the signs of trafficking and encourage members of our communities to respond.
 - Host a panel discussion on human trafficking to educate members and advocate.
 - Learn about the laws involved with trafficking.
- **Engage:** We best demonstrate God's healing love through actions rather than





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words. Churches can get involved in community groups that advocate for local anti-trafficking efforts; support the collaborative work of county health and human service departments, law enforcement agencies and multiple nonprofit agencies. Build relationships with local law enforcement to understand how the church can support their efforts to fight trafficking.

- Work to reduce community factors: poverty, serious family conflict, child abuse and neglect, out-of-home placement, running away from home, etc. that make youth vulnerable
- Engage in ministry to at-risk groups. Traffickers prey on and exploit those who are most vulnerable, including teen runaways or teens who age out of foster care; children in the juvenile justice system; adults who are economically vulnerable, and women who experience domestic violence or assault.

In Matthew 25:40, Jesus says, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” Working with trafficking victims can be challenging and requires patience. Abused victims have suffered trauma, and healing takes time. When Christians serve them and their needs, they serve Jesus. Ezekiel 34:16 says, “I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.”

Heavenly Father, we make a commitment to stand together in prayer. We pray for their strength and salvation of the victims and survivors, for their protection, freedom, and justice, for their hope and healing. Father, we pray for the conviction, repentance, and salvation of the traffickers and for their criminal enterprises demolished; oppressors arrested and prosecuted. We pray for the implementation of just legislation by those in authority. Father, we pray for your design to raise awareness and to keep the Church stirred to action. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.





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Toolkits and resources geared toward churches who want to engage in anti-human trafficking efforts are available through these websites:

- SA Justice: sajustice.us
- Stop the Traffik: stophetraffik.org
- Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAAST): faastinternational.org
- Alliance for Freedom, Restoration, and Justice (AFRJ): engagetogether.com/church
- The Salvation Army: salvationarmy.org/ihq/antitrafficking
- Nazarene Compassionate Ministries: ncm.org/trafficking
- Ending Human Trafficking podcast: endinghumantrafficking.org
- If your church is interested in getting involved in anti-trafficking efforts, do not hesitate to reach out to discuss partnering with The Salvation Army STOP-IT program at STOP-IT@usc.salvationarmy.org.

