

Prayer Guide for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender - based Violence in South Africa

This prayer guide has been created for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) from 25 Nov – 10 Dec.

Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow. Isaiah 1:17 (NIV)

We're aware that as you read through this guide, you may think of other nations and contexts where Gender-Based Violence is a major concern. Allow this guide to act as a starting point for your prayers for others.

The situation

In South Africa, Gender Based Violence affects mostly women and children. Though amongst the children that suffer, many of them are boy children who grow up to be men – somehow the statistics still report much more women suffering and ending up dead from GBV. According to statistics, a woman is murdered every three hours in South Africa.¹ And Gender-Based Violence is still increasing at an alarming rate, making it one of the world's most unsafe places for women. According to the Rape Crisis advocacy group, 40% of women experience rape at least once in their lifetime in SA².

Global Risk Insights reported that during the lockdown of the COVID 19 pandemic "The government's Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Command Centre, a call centre to support victims of Gender-Based Violence, recorded more than 120,000 victims in the first three weeks of the lockdown. Just weeks later in Pretoria, a similar call centre was receiving up to 1,000 calls a day from women and children who were confined to abusive homes seeking urgent help. Prior to the pandemic, femicide in South Africa was already five times higher than the global

¹ [HRW: Gender-based violence remains rampant in South Africa – DW – 11/25/2021](#)

² <https://rapecrisis.org.za/>

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average and the female interpersonal violence death rate was the fourth-highest out of the 183 countries listed by the World Health Organisation in 2016.”³

A note on how to pray through this guide

- While we created this resource for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, feel free to use it at any time of year.
- We’ve separated the guide into sections to help you work through it: Praying for those currently trapped in Gender-Based Violence, survivors of Gender-Based Violence, including the perpetrators of Gender-Based Violence, the circumstances, activists and churches, and people in power. You can pray through this guide in its entirety, or you can choose one section to spend time on.
- This guide has a lot of information in it. Don’t feel like you have to pray about every single thing mentioned. Allow the Holy Spirit to highlight a few specific points, and don’t be afraid to spend your time on them.

Cultures that minimize and diminish the personhood or humanity of women have been dominant throughout history. It is a very sad reality to even find horrendous stories of the treatment of women detailed in the Bible. Although, for Christ followers, there is hope: Jesus comes to change everything concerning how women are seen and treated. One of the greatest examples is how he disappoints the group of men seeking his approval to stone a woman caught in adultery. Jesus calls for the one amongst them without sin to cast the first stone – one by one the men leave until nobody is left to accuse the woman! (John 7:53-8:11). That’s how radical Jesus was to the culture during his time on earth!

*So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. **Genesis 1:27 (NLT)***

³ [South Africa’s Secondary Pandemic: A Crisis of Gender Based Violence | Global Risk Insights](#)

Some questions to ask?

Use paper and pencils or markers to answer the questions -

- 'What does Jesus want for women in SA?
- 'What is my image of woman and is it different from God's view and how He created them? What caused/s that?'
- 'Have I been silent or complicit in perpetuating a skewed view of women or not giving voice to those who are vulnerable/oppressed?'

A prayer written by a man

"Lord Jesus, when I consider the plight of an average woman in the hands of an average man today, as a man I am ashamed. I am ashamed of how women have historically and continue to suffer in the hands of men.

Lord, help me with the courage I need to rise up and be different in my community and my own family. Help me Lord with the strength I need to call out these acts of violence in my community whenever I witness them. Help me Jesus find repentance for my own soul, that I might not walk away from the scene unchanged, but that seeing and witnessing Gender-Based Violence will challenge me in the core of my being to be a different man – a man who is loving, caring, protecting, uplifting, respectful, and honouring to women. Help me Lord find other likeminded men who I can partner with to do our part in putting a stop to this shameful reality for women in our nation. Amen."

*Everyone who saw it said, "Nothing like this has ever happened or has been seen since the day the Israelites came out of the land of Egypt until now. Think it over, discuss it, and speak up!" **Judges 19: 30 (CSB)***

As you pray through each section of this guide we implore you to consider these 3 steps.

1. *Think it over. Consider it. Imagine it.*
2. *Discuss it. Take counsel. Understand it.*
3. *Speak up. Speak your mind. Say something!*

Pray for those currently trapped in Gender-Based Violence

- Pray for security – that people can exit dangerous situations and get to safety.
- Pray for families – that calling out and exposing abusers leads to the healing of families rather than to their destruction.
- Pray for justice – that corruption is exposed, and that anyone seeking to exploit the victims is stopped.
- Pray for help navigating bureaucracy – that abused people can navigate the systems that can help them and find the best possible future.
- Pray for comfort – that God's Presence is felt by the people suffering.
- Pray for home – that God will provide safe homes where people can thrive.

Pray for survivors of Gender-Based Violence

- Pray for healing – that Jehovah Rapha "The God who heals" would do a healing work, physically, mentally, and spiritually.
- Pray for their identity – to be firmly rooted in who God says they are and how precious they are as image bearers of the King. Loved and cherished by Him.
- Pray for God's character to be revealed afresh – As a loving, kind, good, generous, and compassionate father.
- Pray for families – that are caught in the crossfire of this trauma. Who are also grieving and may have feelings of guilt or shame.
- Pray for comfort – that God's presence is felt by the people suffering.
- Pray for permission– and opportunity to grieve and lament and cry out.
- Pray against the stigma - of counselling and support structures.
- Pray for protection from the lies of the evil one who wants to use this evil to sow seeds of doubt and guilt and shame.

*Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.
He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. **Psalms
107:19***

A Prayer for the ultimate healing of victims and the perpetrators of Gender-Based Violence

"God our healer, we cry out to you for the healing of our nation from the scourge of Gender-Based Violence. Rescue the men from the stench of this sin against the women of our nation, and heal them, Lord, from their blindness, complicity, and perpetuating of Gender-Based Violence.

We confess Lord, that to sin against women is to sin against you, for you hate injustice – Forgive us Lord. Send healing like mighty waters upon our nation and rescue us from the grave of our sin. Amen."

Pray for the circumstances

*...your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Matthew 6:10 (NIV UK)*

What are the problems that are leading people to perpetuate Gender-Based Violence?

You don't need to spend a long time here, but get a few facts, maybe from your local police forum or a shelter in your area.

What are the key drivers in your area/communities? Some options and points to think through and pray for. Sit with the Holy Spirit for a moment and invite Him to share His heart for the situation with you.

- Financial stress, Economic pressure
- Inequality
- Substance Abuse
- Overwhelmed police services and judicial system
- Patriarchal cultural norms
- Fear
- Corruption
- Rape culture
- Breakdown in family structure and men as fathers

Pray for those in power

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 NIV

Who are the decision makers that can impact the story? Again you don't need to spend a long time here, but get a few names and maybe pictures of those you can be praying for.

- Pray for the politicians and leaders who are making the key decisions on a national and regional basis. Pray for them by name if you can.
- Ask God to help them to identify the key drivers and give them wisdom on how to manage and improve the situation. Pray that they respond to the plight of abused and broken people with compassion and generosity.
- Ask for justice to be done on every level of government. Pray that decisions would be made with integrity, out of love and not out of fear.
- Pray for more financial and physical support. For resources to be released and the resources collected to end up in the right hands.

"Lord Jesus, we are reminded of the Judge in Luke 18:5, who, because of the widow's persistence, eventually grants her justice – we pray Lord that our police officers at the forefront of receiving Gender-Based Violence complaints will have ears to hear, and the courage to act justly with every case that is brought forward.

Lord, fill our police officers with compassion for the victims they encounter every day. Restore Lord, the value of a woman in the eyes of every police officer, and just like the judge in Luke 18, may they act justly in helping the victims that they encounter. Amen."

Pray for the Church

- Praise God for the work he is and has been doing for victims and survivors of Gender-Based Violence through organisations and churches and shelters.
- Give thanks for the men and woman who are fighting this scourge, especially considering all the obstacles they face.
- Ask for blessing and strengthening of the front-line workers.
- Ask for God to call people to the ministry of creating safe places and shelters, as well as counselling and care facilities.
- Pray for the resources and financial provision of these facilities.
- Pray for church leaders and clergy to have discernment and wisdom if a victim is open with them, and be able to speak up, instead of forcing victims to return to their partners.

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“Lord Jesus, we recognize how desensitized to Gender-Based Violence our society is, we are even more sorry how we as a church have also been desensitized into ignoring issues of Gender-Based Violence in our communities. Forgive us Lord for our collective inaction in calling our congregants to Rise up against this scourge, Call it out, and Do something about Gender-Based Violence whenever and wherever we witness or encounter it.

Lord, we pray that the church will be restored as a place of safety for women suffering abuse from their male counterparts. Forgive us Lord for those instances where we have viewed our social standing as your church to be more important than the justice deserved by the victims of Gender-Based Violence in our congregations. Amen.”

Keep praying

Host a 24-7 Prayer Room centred around the Gender-Based Violence crisis to rally your community to pray together – you can learn more about how to host a Prayer Room [here](#).

Connect with us

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