

# Hand In Hand

Bible studies to transform our response to **sexual violence**



tearfund

# Acknowledgements

The following people have provided wisdom and insight during the development of this resource: Rev Dornic Misolo (Kenya), Evie Vernon (USA), Hannah Swithinbank (UK), Mandy Marshall (UK), Mercinta-Elaine Maras (Papua New Guinea).

Information has been used from Tearfund's Hand in Hand: Bible Studies to Transform Our Response to HIV and Restored's church resource pack in the development of this resource.

## Hand In Hand

**Bible studies to transform  
our response to sexual violence**

Written by Bongi Zengele

Contributions from Sarah Reilly and  
Helen Hekel

Editor: Seren Boyd

Illustration: Petra Röhr-Rouendaal, Gabriel Vitalicio

Design: Gabriel Vitalicio

Scripture quotations taken from the Holy Bible,  
New International Version. Copyright © 1973,  
1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used with  
the permission of Hodder and Stoughton Ltd.

Published by Tearfund.  
Registered Charitable No. 10822 2191 RR0001

Tearfund is a Christian relief and development  
agency building a global network of local  
churches to help eradicate poverty.

© Tearfund 2021



# Contents

Introduction to the resource .....	3
Notes on the Bible studies .....	4
Adapting the Bible studies to use as sermons .....	5
Guidance for facilitators .....	6
Facilitating discussions on sensitive topics .....	8
Introduction to gender and sexual violence .....	10

---

## Bible Studies

<b>1</b> Sexual violence in the Bible .....	12
<b>2</b> Full inclusion of survivors of sexual violence .....	14
<b>3</b> The body of Christ has experienced sexual violence .....	16
<b>4</b> Gender and restoring relationships .....	18
<b>5</b> Reducing stigma and discrimination .....	20
<b>6</b> Challenging violence within families .....	22
<b>7</b> The perpetrators of violence .....	24
<b>8</b> Human trafficking and its impact on sexual and gender-based violence .....	26
<b>9</b> A healthy marriage leads to a healthy family .....	28
<b>10</b> Demonstrating compassion .....	30
<b>11</b> Seeking justice and advocating for human rights .....	32
<b>12</b> Responding to practical needs .....	34

---

Bible passages .....	36
Practical guidelines for responding to sexual violence.....	43
Self-discovery tool .....	50
Glossary .....	52
Further reading and useful resource material .....	54
Index .....	55

# Introduction to the Resource

This book explores passages from the Bible to help us gain some insight into the impact of sexual violence on our communities and churches, and to suggest ways we can respond. These Bible studies are designed to be used in small groups, such as Bible study groups, Mothers' Union meetings, youth groups or other women's ministry groups. They can also be used by individuals but more learning is likely to come in a group discussion setting. As the Bible is the foundation of Christian teaching, it is important to understand what it says on the issue of sexual violence.

## OBJECTIVE

To equip churches to have a positive impact in preventing and responding to sexual violence in their church and community.

## Why is this resource important?

The **aim of the resource** is to provide information and tools to enable individuals, local churches and communities to:

- create an awareness of sexual violence and its impact on individuals and communities
- explore what the Bible says about sexual violence and how this teaching can be applied
- identify if sexual violence happens in our own church and community
- understand our role and responsibility in relation to sexual violence
- create safe environments in churches for survivors of sexual violence
- advocate for appropriate support for survivors to help them deal with the consequences of sexual violence.

Sexual violence is defined by the World Health Organization as 'any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim'. Sexual violence happens in all countries across the world; it can happen within marriages, homes, churches and communities. Violence can be committed by someone known to the survivor or by a complete stranger. Violence can be experienced by anyone, regardless of ethnicity, age or social standing. Survivors can suffer severe physical and emotional consequences. They often feel shame and guilt as well as fear of stigma, discrimination and further violence, which leads to the issue not being reported or spoken of openly.

Churches are an integral part of communities worldwide, with a mandate to care and stand with people who are marginalised and vulnerable. Shame, fear and lack of understanding often lead to sexual violence being hidden in both churches and the wider communities. It is important to create an environment in which both men, women, girls and boys feel able to speak about these issues and share their own personal experiences. This resource is important as it seeks to empower all members of the church and community to break that silence and enable them to understand and respond to sexual violence together. Churches worldwide have huge untapped potential to be catalysts in transforming communities around this issue.



# Notes on the Bible Studies

Bible studies are important:

- for the church to reflect on what the Bible says about key issues
- for people to be challenged and encouraged to grow in their faith
- for small groups to learn and share understanding.

This resource uses Contextual Bible Study (CBS) methodology: this approach is an interactive study of biblical texts and allows the reader to engage his/her context with the context of the Bible. We have chosen this approach to help churches understand more about the issue and about their role and responsibilities in responding to sexual violence.

## Structure of Bible studies

Each Bible study follows the same outline.

The **first page** contains background information for the facilitator and some suggestions for practical responses. This page is not to be read out to the group, but the facilitator should take time to read it and think about the study before the group meets. The facilitator's pages are set out in the following format:

### Background information

This section helps provide useful background information before beginning the study. The facilitator needs to read and remember these points.

### Tips for the facilitator

These tips can help the facilitator draw out relevant discussion points and experiences.

### Ideas for practical response

These studies may change how we feel about certain issues – ideally, they should lead to action too. As the discussion draws to an end, use the ideas included here to help people focus on practical responses.

### How could this study change us?

We list the objectives of the study – what the participants should gain as a result of the Bible study. There are three kinds of objectives:



**KNOWING** – these describe the practical knowledge and learning to be gained

**BEING** – these describe changes to our thinking and understanding, changing our heart and our responses

**ACTING** – these are the practical responses we can make as a result of our learning

The second page contains different elements relevant to the Bible passage and discussion.

### Bible passage

Read the Bible passage or passages together and refer to these throughout the discussion.

### Discussion – in biblical times...

We start by reflecting on what the passage meant during biblical times, who it was written for and the situation at that time.

### Discussion – in the context of sexual violence...

Then we consider what the Bible passage is saying to us today – what is its relevance to us, to our lives in the present times, and in particular, what is it saying about the issue of sexual violence?

### Key learning points and prayers points

We have written some key learning points to take away from the discussions and some prayer points you can finish with in your group. Check that these points have come out through the discussion. These should provide a good summary of the learning gained through the study. Of course, you are free to adapt these and add more.

# Adapting the Bible Studies to Use As Sermons

These Bible studies are designed to equip pastors and church leaders with the information and tools they need to help their congregation have a deeper understanding of sexual violence. They will help everyone have an informed, unbiased, biblical perspective of the issues around sexual violence.

All the topics considered for group Bible study can provide an excellent basis for sermons. The church has a clear biblical mandate to work among people living in poverty and those who are marginalised in our societies. Often this will include people who have been impacted by sexual violence in a variety of ways. The church has a key role to play in informing its members about sexual violence with teaching that is biblically inspired. Church leaders are respected and have authority, not just within their church communities but usually in wider society as well. They are well placed to challenge stigma, unhelpful attitudes and damaging myths, and to advocate for the most vulnerable people within society.

Yet, often, church leaders are reluctant to discuss and preach about sensitive issues around sexuality, family relationships, sexual violence and harmful traditional practices. This reluctance allows ignorance to persist, which damages so many lives, and particularly the lives of young people. We need courageous leaders who can speak biblical truth in love and inspire their members to share the love of Christ within their communities.

This book takes a fresh look at many Bible passages. The studies can easily be adapted into sermons. Begin by using the background information and the introduction

to each Bible study to refresh your own thinking and understanding. You may want to research the ideas in more detail by using the references provided.

When using the Bible studies as the basis for sermons, we recommend careful reading of the passages, followed by reflection. The additional Bible passages given at the end of each Bible study may also prove a rich source of ideas. Consider the likely answers to the discussion questions relating to the biblical passages and use these to provide an introduction to explain the Bible passage and underline the key learning points.

Then consider the discussion questions that relate to today in the context of sexual violence. What key points would come out of these? Use the key findings as a checklist to ensure all the main points are covered in your sermon teaching.

When concluding, look at both the learning objectives and at the practical response. Revisit your sermon notes: what changes do you want to make...

- in people's understanding and knowledge?
- in people's attitudes and hearts?
- in people's practical response to your preaching?

What are the challenges you will leave with people? How do you hope they will respond?

Can you include some case studies, stories and personal experiences in the church service that will bring your sermon to life and make it really relevant to the congregation?

**‘In order to fight sexual violence as a church, we need to do more awareness raising on what sexual violence is, advocate on the issue and provide more practical support to survivors of sexual violence.’**

Pastor from Ntungwa Parish, Rwanda



# Guidance For Facilitators

These studies are designed for group discussion and learning. They do not require a ‘teacher’ but rather a facilitator.

## The role of the facilitator

The facilitator has an important role to play in ensuring that all those present have the opportunity to participate. A good facilitator can help to create a relaxed and open atmosphere where people feel safe and can share their personal thoughts and experiences. The facilitator should seek to build up relationships within the study group. This helps people to raise and discuss sensitive or difficult issues.

Although the facilitator is likely to be in some kind of leadership role within the church, the pastor or minister may not be the best person to facilitate these studies; people might expect them to ‘teach’ and provide the ‘right’ answers. The facilitator needs to be comfortable with discussing openly issues that people often shy away from; sex, for example, is not often discussed openly in a group.

The facilitator may require additional support throughout this process, if they are providing support to participants who have experienced sexual violence personally. Please see our section on practical guidelines (pages 43–49) for more information on this.

## BEFORE – DURING – AFTER

There is no one way to facilitate a group discussion; different groups have different needs, and facilitators have different styles. But there are some common key guidelines for good facilitation.

### BEFORE YOU START

**COMPLETE THE SELF-DISCOVERY TOOL (page 52)** – This will help you identify the areas of which people may have limited knowledge or understanding. If you score low in a particular area, you can then start with the relevant Bible study linked to it.

**PERSONAL PREPARATION** – It is important for the facilitators to spend time preparing for the group discussions. Take the time to read and reflect on the Bible passage and the facilitator’s notes. We have provided some background information for each study as well as some guidance on how to facilitate the discussions and what questions to ask. You may want to bring your own ideas and illustrations too.

**BIBLE READINGS** – The full Bible readings for each study are available at the back of this book (pages 37–43) and are taken from the New International Version. You can photocopy them to use in your groups. It can be useful to bring different Bible translations to compare. Encourage people to bring their own Bibles.



## Facilitation is about...

- ENSURING**
  - everyone has a voice
  - everyone is valued for their contribution
- ENABLING**
  - each person to discover their potential
  - everyone to work together to tackle common problems

## DURING THE DISCUSSION

**TIME KEEPING** – We recommend allowing one to two hours for each study. This allows enough time for people to participate fully in the discussions. Keep to the time and make sure all the points and questions are covered. If there is a lively discussion and those taking part want to discuss a certain topic more, you can agree to do half of the study and meet again to cover the second part.

**BEGIN AND CLOSE WITH PRAYER** – It is important to start and end these group discussions with a word of prayer and maybe a time of worship, if appropriate. This will set a suitable environment, preparing participants for a critical engagement with scripture. Ask participants to be involved in prayer and worship for every session: this will give them opportunities to ‘own’ the process.

**AGREE ON GROUND RULES** – Ask groups to agree on ground rules so that each person feels free to share their ideas. Ensure that the group agrees together on rules regarding respect, listening, confidentiality and participation.

**AVOID ‘TEACHING’** – People have all the knowledge and experience necessary in order to learn and be inspired by the Bible. Give people confidence to say what they think. Be sure to offer correct, factual information where there is confusion, but your job as the facilitator is to help people discover together what the passage is saying and what it is saying to them.

**INVOLVE EVERYONE** – Helping all group members to take part in the discussion is an important part of group facilitation. Pay attention to who is dominating discussions and who is not contributing as much. Encourage quieter people to share their views. For example, you could ask a direct question; but remember, people have different reasons for being quiet, and they may just be thinking deeply! If a participant is very talkative, you can ask him or her to allow others to take part in the discussion and then ask the others to respond to what that person is sharing. You can use different techniques, such as asking everyone to share what they think in turn, in order to hear from everyone present.

**CREATE SMALL GROUPS** – It is easier to share and discuss ideas in a smaller group of people (four to six), especially when discussing sensitive issues such as sexual violence. You can make groups of men or women only or separate people by age (for example, a group of men who are over 18 years old).



**‘Go to the people. Live with them. Learn from them. Love them.**

**Start with what they know. Build with what they have.**

**But with the best leaders, when the work is done, the task accomplished, the people will say, “We have done this ourselves.”**

Lao Tsu, China (700 BC)

**SHARE LEARNING IN A LARGE GROUP** – Ask small groups to share the key points of their discussions with the wider group. This enables others to hear their thoughts. It is also useful to keep a record of what is being shared; perhaps write a few notes for yourself for future group discussions.

**SUMMARISE** – Try to stop and summarise what has been said frequently, for example after each group has spoken to the wider group. Check that everyone has understood what has been shared.

## AFTER THE DISCUSSION

**REFLECT** – Once the participants have left, take a little time to reflect on how the discussion went. Write down any key points that were raised for you to research further and share with the group next time. If there is anything you would do differently next time, make a note of it now. If you facilitated with another person, take some time together to share your thoughts.



# Facilitating Discussions on Sensitive Topics

**Sexual violence is a sensitive topic. It is important for the facilitator to create the right environment for people to discuss the issue.**

Consider the following tips when facilitating groups:

**CREATIVITY** – When introducing a sensitive topic, think about different ways to present it to the participants: for example, through using role play, telling a story, showing some pictures to demonstrate a problem or asking groups to discuss particular issues.

**SENSITIVITY** – Some participants may have experienced sexual violence themselves. Allow the opportunity for people to share these experiences if they want to, but do not ask anyone directly about their own background. Do not push people to share if they are not ready.

**STORY TELLING** – Some people may find it easier to talk about their experiences as if it was a story about someone else: for example, encourage them to say ‘my friend was attacked’ rather than ‘I was attacked’. You can suggest that no names are used to enable confidentiality to be maintained. This allows them to talk anonymously about themselves.

**REST** – Ensure there are plenty of breaks and fun activities to relieve any tension from the sensitive discussions.



## Creating a safe space

It is important to create a space where people feel free to discuss their understanding of sexual violence and talk openly about their experiences. Sexual violence is a traumatic experience and it may take a long time for survivors’ trauma to heal. It may take time to create an environment where survivors feel accepted and listened to. Continue to listen humbly to survivors and include them in all aspects of discussion. Often, survivors will benefit from receiving special support from a trained counsellor. If your church has trained professionals, arrange for separate counselling to be available for survivors, if possible. Ensure you create a safe environment for the survivors and protect them in public discussions at all times. We encourage you to read the practical guide on pages 43–49 to help you support someone sharing their experience of sexual violence for the first time.

## Guidelines and practical tips

**GOOD ENVIRONMENT** Focus on creating an environment where all individuals feel confident about being involved in discussions. If some people are not participating, ask them privately if there is anything that can be done to help them participate.

**NON-JUDGEMENTAL ATTITUDE** This is vital for survivors to be able to share their experiences, without fearing what people think of them.

**LISTEN TO SURVIVORS** Let them know they are being heard. Once they are able to speak about their own experience, survivors can also help care for and support other survivors.

**BE PATIENT** The survivor may feel unable to express themselves for some time after the attack and may only do so when they feel safe and they trust the person listening.

**Confidentiality** is very important, especially when working with survivors of sexual violence. You must make sure that any personal information is not shared with others outside of the discussion, unless the person gives you permission to do so. Tell your group at the start of the meeting that, in order to keep a safe space, all the information shared during the discussions must not be shared with people outside the group.

**NOTE:** *There are circumstances in which you may need to tell a third party about the information you have heard. This is in case someone is in grave danger and the police need to be involved, particularly when this involves a child. See more on pages 46–47.*

**‘You must be the change you want to see in the world.’**

Mahatma Gandhi



## The facilitator’s own awareness and understanding of sexual violence

There are key things that each facilitator needs to be aware of when leading discussions on sexual violence:

### A. HIS/HER OWN ATTITUDE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE

This means the facilitator should be aware of his/her own beliefs and should disclose any myths he/she may have believed, as well as understanding how culture and beliefs have shaped his/her understanding of sexual violence. This is the first and the most important step: being open about one’s own misconceptions and misunderstandings is vital to facilitating impartial discussions and to ensure survivors of sexual violence feel included within these discussions. It also allows the facilitator to experience personal growth and learning.

The self-discovery tool (on pages 50–51) is a tool that enables the facilitator to reflect on and understand his/her personal attitudes and behaviour around issues of sexual violence. It is important to understand that we all have different views of and attitudes to sexual violence. The facilitator may learn from members of the community and be challenged as he/she listens to individuals’ experiences.

### B. GROUP DISCUSSIONS MAY INVOLVE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The facilitator needs to be sensitive in facilitating discussions about sexual violence as some participants may have had painful experiences and may not have received support and treatment to enable healing. It is important to have a trained counsellor at hand or be able to refer survivors to expert care and support.

### C. RECENT INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA

These events may have been reported in the newspapers, or talked about in the community or on the radio. The way these events have been reported will also affect an individual’s thoughts and beliefs about sexual violence.

# Introduction to Gender and Sexual Violence

The terms 'sex' and 'gender' are used to speak about the differences between men and women. 'Sex' relates to the biological differences between men and women – what makes us male and female. 'Gender' relates to the nonbiological differences between men and women, such as behaviour, dress, roles and responsibilities. It refers to the way society defines men and women, including their qualities and roles in a community: for example, a culture and society may say that women should be compassionate, gentle and nurturing, while men should be forceful and strong and take leadership. But is this always true for all men and women in all cultures? It is important to understand that since gender is a construct of society, it is not static: it is dynamic and changes with time and circumstances.



## Unequal power relations

It is important to note that there are some apparently conflicting messages in the Bible about the roles of men and women (for example, Galatians 3:28 and 1 Timothy 2:11–12). We need to think carefully about the context and background of such passages to help us understand them. Christians still debate the ways in which we should apply these verses, and it is important to discuss our different views in a loving manner. Unfortunately, relationships between men and women are not equal, because most societies give men more power over women. These influences shape the way women and men relate to one another in society. Individuals in positions of power can abuse their power, leading to psychological, emotional and physical violence: for example, a teacher insisting that a student has sex with them in exchange for good grades is an abuse of that teacher's power over the student. Since people create gender roles, people can also change them.

## What is sexual violence?

Sexual violence is a form of gender-based violence. Sexual violence is one of the most destructive and yet least recognised human rights abuses in the world. As many as one in three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or abused in some other way – most often by someone she knows, including by her husband or another male family member. It is important to know that sexual violence is more often experienced by women and children; however, men can also experience sexual violence.

**Sexual violence refers to any act, attempt or threat of a sexual nature that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, psychological and emotional harm.**

**‘Sexual violence refers to any unwanted sexual act or activity. There are many different kinds of sexual violence, including but not restricted to: rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, rape within marriage / relationships, forced marriage, so-called honour-based violence, female genital mutilation, trafficking, sexual exploitation, and ritual abuse. Sexual violence can be perpetrated by a complete stranger, or by someone known and even trusted, such as a friend, colleague, family member, partner or ex-partner.’**

Rape Crisis England and Wales ([www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk))

Sexual violence happens when one person (the perpetrator) abuses the power that they have over another person (the survivor or victim), in a sexual way. In most cases, this takes place in a private or isolated location where there are no witnesses.

## EXAMPLES

Anyone can become a target of sexual violence. It can take place in many different settings:

- **Inter-personal violence:** sexual violence can happen within a marriage or relationship. These acts are often hidden because they happen within the home, away from public view. This can be a difficult cycle to break, even if the survivor wants the violence to stop.
- **Harmful traditional practices:** some cultural rites of passage or practices can be harmful. Culture is very important but, if a practice is harmful, it is important to observe closely and try and suggest alternative practices. An example of this in some societies is female genital mutilation/ cutting (FGM/C).
- **Stranger violence:** violence carried out by someone who is not known to the survivor.

## EFFECTS

The effects of sexual violence can be both visible and invisible, affecting people from all parts of the community. Evidence of an attack can be found in blood stains, semen or any physical injuries from the attack. The survivor can also experience physical, mental and emotional wounds. Sexual violence can happen anywhere within the community, and to anyone. Sexual violence leaves its victims with long-term psychological and physical trauma, results in damaged relationships within families and communities, and is found within communities in all contexts, including those experiencing conflict.

## How the church can help

In most communities, there are very limited resources available to support survivors after an act of sexual violence has occurred. In most countries, sexual violence is a criminal offence but very often the crimes are not reported to the police, especially if there are no witnesses to the attack as the survivor may feel that no one will believe them if they report the matter.

It is important for the church and community to understand more about sexual violence and what can cause attacks to happen. The survivor is NEVER to blame for the attack. Survivors require care and support as they seek to recover from the trauma. It is vital that survivors are supported and feel able to report the attack to the police and local authorities. It is equally important for the church to be equipped to support the emotional and physical needs of the survivors: for example, helping them seek medical help, comforting them, supporting them in denouncing perpetrators to the police and local authorities.

By discussing sexual violence openly through these Bible studies, individuals will understand that sexual violence is not acceptable and see that it is possible to prevent attacks from happening.



# 1 Sexual Violence in the Bible

## Background information

Sexual violence is not just something that happens in society today; it has happened throughout history. The story of Tamar illustrates a chain of events that leads to a devastating act: the rape of Tamar. This Bible study is used as a tool to engage churches and communities with the issue of sexual violence. Speaking on the subject of sexual violence often brings silence from individuals, so this study is aimed at breaking that silence.

## Tips for the facilitator

Allow participants to relax and express themselves freely about similar experiences in their own lives. You may facilitate this by inviting people to share similar stories to Tamar's from your own community. This may trigger memories of unreported cases of sexual violence or gender-based violence, leaving participants feeling very vulnerable. The small groups can present their discussion to the whole group. Creativity is particularly vital here, as individuals may struggle to articulate their responses. A drama or drawing may be the best method for some groups; you could use the ones provided here or look for other ones.

## Ideas for practical response

It is important to acknowledge that it often takes time for survivors to go through a healing process. Do not be intimidated by fear of explosive and highly charged emotional responses. In most cases, these experiences are not easily expressed and there are few safe spaces or loving environments that allow free expression of these emotions. For some participants this may be the first time

they have confided in anyone about a painful experience. This calls for extra care and counselling depending on the severity of the case. It is therefore recommended that a trained counsellor should be present to help deal with cases that may need individual attention.

## How will this study change us?

### WE WILL KNOW...

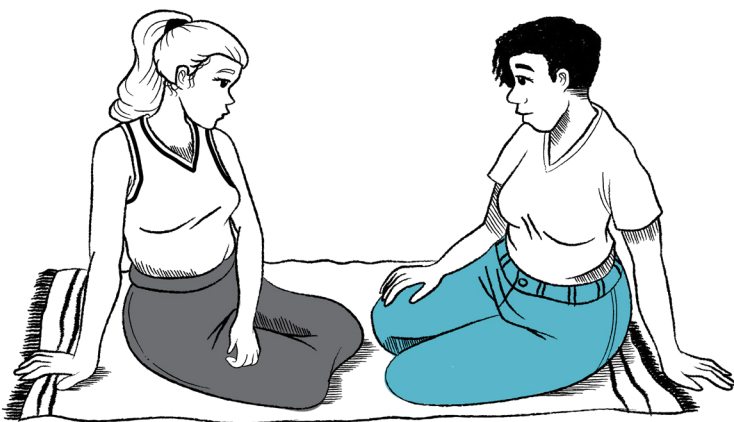
- that sexual violence is not a curse and can happen in our homes, churches, schools and workplaces
- that sexual violence can happen to anyone and it is NOT the survivor's fault
- that sexual violence can be prevented and must be challenged
- that restoration is possible for survivors of sexual violence.

### WE WILL BE...

- more caring, compassionate and supportive towards survivors of sexual violence
- available to listen to survivors' experiences, providing a safe environment for them to be open without feeling vulnerable
- non-judgemental, offering a helping hand where needed.

### WE WILL ACT...

- in solidarity with those who have experienced sexual violence
- prudently and justly in providing care and support for survivors of sexual violence, including accompanying them to access medical and legal services
- with perseverance to advocate justice and restoration of human relationships, without stigma and discrimination.



# 1 The Story of Tamar\* (2 Samuel 13:1–22)

The story of Tamar is a clear account of a planned act of sexual violence taking place in the house of David. The perpetrator, a half-brother who is full of lust towards his half-sister, Tamar, admits to his passion for Tamar and is advised to create a story that would make it easy for him to have access to Tamar. The sexual violence that results has a severe effect on her: she tears her dress and covers herself with ashes as a symbol of mourning that she has been violated.

This story is a reminder that sexual violence is an abuse of human rights. Together, in partnership with all survivors of sexual violence, we need to speak out against it. We must stand firm, holding hands in prayer for justice and restoration of broken relationships.

## Discussion

### IN BIBLICAL TIMES...

1. Read 2 Samuel 13:1–22 in small groups. Share with each other what you think the text is about and summarise your understanding to the group.
2. Who are the characters in this story and what do we know about them?
3. What is the role of each of the male characters in the rape of Tamar?
4. What does Tamar say and do? Why does she act in that way?

### IN THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE...

5. Do you think sexual violence can happen within Christian homes and churches?
6. What does God say about sexual violence?
7. What do men and women who have been raped think about themselves? What does God say to men and women who have been raped?
8. Where can a survivor of sexual violence find support in your community?
9. What will you now do in response to this Bible study?



## Key learning points

- Amnon abused his power and authority to get what he wanted, despite the harm done to Tamar.
- Tamar's role in the household made her vulnerable, and she could not refuse to serve or cook for this man. Despite being the daughter of King David, she was not protected by the men in her life. Instead, she was blamed, shunned, and ordered to suffer in silence.
- Sexual violence can take place anywhere, and it is important to create more awareness that survivors are NOT to blame for the violence.

## Prayer points

- Pray for healing of the pain and suffering caused by sexual violence (physical, mental and emotional).
- Pray for the protection of women and girls such as Tamar who are vulnerable to sexual violence.
- Pray for caring and godly men and women who will speak out against sexual violence and seek to protect the most vulnerable people.

## Further passages for reading

- **Genesis 19:1–12** Sodom and Gomorrah
- **John 4:1–30** Jesus and the Samaritan woman
- **Judges 19:1–30** A Levite and his concubine
- **John 8:1–11** The woman caught in adultery
- **Mark 5:24–34** The woman healed from her illness
- **2 Samuel 11:1–26** David and Bathsheba

\* This Bible study was adapted from *Hand in hand: Bible studies to transform our response to HIV*

# 2 Full Inclusion of Survivors of Sexual Violence

## Background information

Our cultural and religious beliefs often shape our attitudes. This affects how we behave and how we treat other people. This Bible study can help you explore how Jesus interacted with those who were outcast because they were seen as 'unclean', immoral or not worthy. By studying this passage, we can challenge our response to those who are rejected and experience stigma.

It is important to understand that survivors of sexual violence often experience self-stigma. This is the feeling that we are 'unworthy' or that we are to blame for something that has happened to us. Those experiencing self-stigma may think people are avoiding them or pointing 'accusing' fingers. This causes low self-esteem and anguish and prevents us living life to the full and becoming all that God intends for us.

In this study, we learn how easily our attitudes can pull families apart. Unhelpful attitudes about sexual violence can pull apart the family of the church in just the same way. We have to change our attitudes if we are to enjoy the full participation that God wants for all of us as his family.

## Tips for the facilitator

The facilitator needs to explain the concept of 'unclean' in the Old Testament (see Leviticus chapter 15). To be seen as 'unclean' or 'impure' was to be un-holy, and meant that a person had to be separated from other people, from God, and from the place where God was (e.g. the Temple). In the Old Testament, impurity, or a lack of cleanliness, was seen as originating from sin or from natural conditions such as bodily discharges, illness or touching something that was dead.

Examine Jesus' response towards 'unclean' people (such as those with leprosy or female bleeding or those who were dead). Consider how participation is encouraged from those of us who have experienced sexual violence. Be sensitive to people in the group who may experience self-stigma, such as survivors of sexual violence or people living with HIV.

Discuss how the church can change its judgemental attitudes and fully understand that survivors are NOT to blame for the sexual violence that they have experienced.

## Ideas for practical response

How can we understand the feelings of people who have experienced sexual violence? How can we help those of us who have experienced sexual violence to feel we can make a contribution and use our skills and experiences to help others?

## How will this study change us?

### WE WILL KNOW...

- and understand as a church the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment where all people trust and serve each other
- and reflect on the concept of full participation and explore how survivors of sexual violence can participate fully in effective prevention and the response to sexual violence.

### WE WILL BE...

- able to understand how inclusive Christ is towards all of humanity
- able to seek humbly to understand God's purposes for his church.

### WE WILL ACT...

- to encourage the full participation of people who have experienced sexual violence
- to restore the dignity of people who have experienced sexual violence
- to bring equality among God's people by fighting injustice in society.

# 2 The Samaritan Woman at the Well\* (John 4:1–30)

In this study, we see Jesus interacting with a Samaritan woman who is broken and rejected by her own people. Jesus deliberately chose to travel through Samaria on his way to Galilee, even though the Jews despised the Samaritans. This meeting was not an accident. The Samaritan woman is shocked that a Jewish man is talking to her and also asking her for help. In this simple act of asking for water, Jesus challenges many of the social customs of his day. He demonstrates that this woman is created and loved by God, despite her past. He does not treat her as a social outcast, does not condemn her as others do, but meets her in her need and gives her life.



## Discussion

### IN BIBLICAL TIMES...

1. Why do you think the woman came alone to draw water from the well at noon when it was very hot?
2. How do you think this woman feels about herself at the beginning of the story?
3. Why was the Samaritan woman so surprised that Jesus asked her for water?
4. What does Jesus mean when he tells the woman he will give her 'living water'?
5. What lesson do we learn from the passage about Jesus' contact with the Samaritan woman whom the Jews considered as 'unclean'?

### IN THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE...

6. What sort of things do our societies consider as unclean?
7. How does self-stigma act as a barrier to providing care and support for survivors of sexual violence today?
8. How can the church respond to people who feel isolated, unworthy or excluded?
9. What do you think are the reasons why survivors of sexual violence don't report an attack?

## Key learning points

- Jesus clearly shows us that he considers all people equal and that no race or group of people is inferior to others.

- Our attitudes as individuals may prevent our church from being the safe and welcoming community that God intended it to be. We must change our own attitudes and share God's love with those who need it the most.
- Like Jesus, we have a responsibility to challenge judgemental attitudes.
- Sometimes, those who have experienced sexual violence may feel that they have nothing to offer due to self-stigma, yet each of us is called to contribute as a part of the body of Christ.

## Prayer points

- Pray that we can really love everyone as Christ did, following biblical principles, and be a good witness in representing God and sharing his unconditional love with all people.
- Pray that judgemental attitudes in the church will change, so that people who have survived sexual violence can find love and support and share their gifts within the church.

## Further passages for reading

- **Psalm 139:13–16** Each of us is precious and valued by God
- **1 John 4:7–12** God's love and our love for each other

\* This Bible study was adapted from *Hand in hand: Bible studies to transform our response to HIV*



# 3 The Body of Christ has Experienced Sexual Violence

## Background information

Sometimes the church ignores the fact that sexual violence can happen within the church or that the church family may include survivors of sexual violence. This can cause pain and division and allow ignorance about sexual violence and its impact on the body of Christ to go unchallenged. It is estimated that one in three women will experience violence during her lifetime. This is not an issue the church can avoid. This passage follows a wonderful description of the spiritual gifts God has given to his church: gifts given to individuals, but used to benefit the whole church.

## Tips for the facilitator

People who have survived sexual violence are valued and important members of our church and have much to contribute as part of the body of Christ. It's important to help people critically assess their own church's attitude towards sexual violence and towards those in the church family who are survivors. What is the ideal situation within a church? What changes need to be made to create this place of welcome, warmth, support and inclusion?



## Ideas for practical response

Help the group imagine that they or someone close to them (wife, daughter, sister, brother etc) experiences sexual violence. How would we like the church and community to respond to us or those close to us? How would Jesus welcome those who have survived sexual violence?

Consider the different needs of those who have experienced sexual violence or those who are trying to support someone who has experienced sexual violence.

## How will this study change us?

### WE WILL KNOW...

- that God considers everyone equal and so should we
- that we are all one in Christ's body including those who have experienced sexual violence.

### WE WILL BE...

- more understanding of how people who have experienced sexual violence can feel excluded
- aware of the specific needs of those who have survived sexual violence. We will not assume we know how it feels to have experienced sexual violence.

### WE WILL ACT...

- to challenge unhelpful attitudes towards sexual violence
- to encourage a positive church response to embrace the practical, emotional and spiritual needs of those who have experienced sexual violence.

# 3 The Church as the Body of Christ\* (1 Corinthians 12:12–27)

The body of Christ has experienced sexual violence, and is starving without a proper home. This is because when one part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. There is no 'us' and 'them'. We are all affected. Our lives are all connected and woven together and we must build on this sense of being connected.

## Discussion

### IN BIBLICAL TIMES...

1. How does the church form one body from its many parts? Are verses 12 and 14 referring to one church or to the whole church family – or both?
2. What are the most important parts of the human body? What happens to the rest of the body when one part of the body is damaged or in pain?

### IN THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE...

3. Why do our churches sometimes not work together well as one body?
4. Jesus' words in verse 13 challenged discrimination against slaves in his day. What would he challenge us about today in the way we discriminate between different groups of people?
5. Do we identify enough with those who suffer in our church body (verse 26)?
6. Read verse 13 aloud together, changing the words 'Jews' to 'survivors of sexual violence' and 'Gentiles' to 'people who have not experienced sexual violence'. What does it mean to share in the one Spirit?
7. How does this picture of the church as one body challenge us about our relationships with those who have survived sexual violence?
8. How would Jesus welcome those who have survived sexual violence?
9. How would we want the church and community to respond to us or those close to us if we had experienced sexual violence?

## Key learning points

- As God's people, we are all one body – sharing the gifts that God has given – not for our benefit but for the benefit of his whole church body.
- God sees only precious children when he looks at us – not poor or rich, not slave or free, not survivors of sexual violence or those who have not experienced sexual violence. We should see people with his eyes too and love each other equally.

## Prayer points

- Pray that our church will be a place of welcome and hope for all who come into it.
- Pray for people who feel our churches do not understand their needs. May they know that God understands their needs.
- Pray that churches around the world will seek to understand the needs of those who are hurting and become places of shared understanding, where the needs of all are met.

## Further passages for reading

- **Galatians 3:26–28** We are all one in Christ
- **Luke 10:27** Love your neighbour as yourself



\* This Bible study was adapted from *Hand in hand: Bible studies to transform our response to HIV*

# 4 Gender and Restoring Relationships

## Background information

This Bible passage looks at the relationship between men and women in Genesis. Over the centuries, women and girls have been discriminated against throughout the world in different ways. In many cultures, sons are valued more highly than daughters. Men and women are treated differently based on their gender. We sometimes justify the fact that men hold positions and power over women. However, the misuse of this power is not what God intended.

Many societies today are characterised by divisions between people, especially between men and women. These divisions have led to poor relationships between men and women. The consequences of this include subordination, oppression, violence and the tendency to treat human beings, especially women and children, as possessions.

## Tips for the facilitator

Inequalities between men and women increase people's vulnerability and are an underlying cause of sexual violence. Who needs to take the initiative in breaking down stereotypes relating to gender – men or women, or both? Explain why our response to this question may reflect stereotypes we promote ourselves. The term 'gender' means both sexes should be equally involved – not just women! Encourage discussion of how Jesus viewed issues of gender. How did he treat his followers, both men and women, given the cultural views of his day? Share success stories where gender stereotypes have been overcome, such as a man helping his wife in caring for the children or making a meal for the family while the wife mowed the lawn and changed the car tires.

## Ideas for practical response

How can we encourage our churches to challenge the accepted stereotypes of male dominance and female subordination, rather than simply endorsing these values?

How do the structures and power relations in our churches need to change, for women and men to be equally valued by the people of God? List some practical steps that could be taken at all levels within the church.

## How will this study change us?

### WE WILL KNOW...

- the importance of celebrating creation, love and good relationships with one another
- how to acknowledge and enhance each other's leadership in dealing with sexual violence.

### WE WILL BE...

- able to work in partnership with each other in preventing and responding to sexual violence
- able to understand God's desire for restored relationships.

### WE WILL ACT...

- to challenge relationships of power that reduce human beings to objects of pleasure
- to reclaim the roles of women in leadership and decision-making in the household.

Read this story of Mr. Moyo with your group. Think of your own context: **is the work of women valued in your community? Can the responsibilities be shared differently between men and women?**

*"What is your job?" Asked the pastor.*

*"I am a businessman," replied Mr. Smith.*

*'Does your wife work?'*

*"No, she stays at home."*

*'I see. How does she spend her day?'*

*"Well, she gets up at 6 in the morning to feed the baby, makes breakfast for the other kids, and get them ready for school. She then cleans the house, goes grocery shopping, does laundry and takes care of the baby. After that she picks up the older kids from school and drives them to their various activities."*

*'Do you help drive the kids around after school?'*

*"No, no, I'm still at work."*

*'And after that?'*

*"Then she goes home and makes dinner for everyone"*

*'What do you do when you get home?'*

*"I have a drink on the sofa and unwind from the day before dinner"*

*'Does she go to bed after supper?'*

*"No, but I do. She has to tidy around the house and put the kids to bed."*

*'But I thought you said your wife does not work?'*

*"Of course she does not work! She stays at home?"*

# 4 'In the Image of God He Created Them' <sup>\*</sup> (Genesis 1:26–28)

This passage looks at the relationship between men and women in Genesis. It shows an equal partnership of man and woman, while Genesis 2 discusses their roles. Paul draws on this second account in 1 Corinthians 11:7–9. In reading the Bible, we recognise that men and women are intricately interconnected. We can reflect on how to relate to each other in a positive and mutually supportive way.

## Discussion

### IN BIBLICAL TIMES...

1. In reading the story of the creation of men and women, what are some of the roles for male and female?
2. What does God empower human beings to do (verses 26 and 28)?
3. What does this passage from Genesis 1 reveal about the importance of men and women working alongside each other in relationships of equality?
4. What does this tell us about the relationship between men and women in a marriage?

### IN THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE...

5. How is the Genesis passage in this study helpful in working out solutions to respond to sexual violence in our society?
6. Name five things you will do to restore relationships within your family and church.

## Key learning points

- God created human beings in his own image and likeness (Genesis 1:27).
- The image of God is reflected in inclusive human relationships, showing God in communion, in partnership and in community (Genesis 1:26–28).
- From Genesis 1:26–28, we can see that the power to subdue and dominate is to be used in stewarding the earth and that we should act with care and justice rather than trying to control other people.



- The dignity of each person consists in reflecting God's image, in caring for and nurturing creation, and in participating in the ongoing process of creation.

## Prayer points

- Pray for the courage for both men and women to challenge unhelpful stereotypes about male and female roles and to encourage biblical reflection on the subject of gender.
- Pray that the gifts of women will be fully released to benefit our churches. Pray for wisdom and leadership in responding to issues around sexual violence.

## Further passages for reading

- **Luke 10:38–42** Jesus encourages Martha to sit at his feet and learn, in the same way men did
- **John 4:4–26** Jesus talks with a Samaritan woman
- **Mark 5:25–34** The woman healed from internal bleeding
- **John 8:2–11** The woman caught in adultery

<sup>\*</sup> This Bible study was adapted from *Hand in hand: Bible studies to transform our response to HIV*

# 5 Reducing Stigma and Discrimination

## Background information

This Bible study looks at how Jesus treats a woman who has committed adultery. He treats her with dignity and love. Stigma, discrimination and silence can all worsen the pain caused by sexual violence. These are not often challenged or confronted in public. Talking openly about sensitive issues is often difficult within churches and communities, especially if people do not have correct information about the issue and about what the Bible says. The church can play a vital role in reducing stigma and discrimination and talking openly about the issue of sexual violence. You will find definitions of the words stigma, self-stigma, discrimination and denial in the Glossary on page 53.



## Tips for the facilitator

Focus on the practical ways in which people who have experienced sexual violence have also experienced stigma and discrimination in churches and communities. What impact has that had on the group, on others and on their families? Are we aware of evidence that some people deny that sexual violence can occur in our churches and families? How can we challenge such denial and encourage openness?

If survivors have spoken openly about their experiences, ask them to share their experiences of stigma and discrimination with you, to further your understanding.

## Ideas for practical response

Sexual violence calls for practical interventions at both church and community level. This may be through establishing community-based support groups for survivors. Support groups can create meaningful safe spaces where individuals can share their experiences with others who have also experienced violence. Peer group members can offer each other healing, providing solidarity as well as psycho-social, emotional and spiritual mutual support.

## How will this study change us?

### WE WILL KNOW...

- that we are equal in the eyes of God, regardless of what we have done and who we are
- that Jesus is compassionate, seeks to restore individuals and calls for justice where sexual violence occurs.

### WE WILL BE...

- more accepting and understanding of people who have experienced sexual violence, allowing everyone to be heard.
- less judgemental, recognising our lack of understanding and not subjecting others to gossip or stigma.

### WE WILL ACT...

- as messengers of hope and love to create an environment in our church where those affected can find healing and hope after trauma.
- as agents of change in creating meaningful campaigns aimed at speaking out against sexual violence and seeking to prevent it.

# 5 The Adulterous Woman\* (John 8:1–11)

This Bible story tells of a woman caught in adultery. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees set out to test Jesus about the law of Moses with regard to such behaviour. The woman is alone and the whole village is against her. She is vulnerable and accused of a sexual offence, and the law suggests that she should be killed violently. She is being judged, but Jesus challenges the Pharisees' legalistic and judgemental attitudes, pointing out that no one is without sin. He treats the woman with dignity, compassion and love. In doing so, he restores her, healing her brokenness, and asks her to return to her community as a changed person, worthy of God's forgiveness and healing.

## Discussion

### IN BIBLICAL TIMES...

1. Who are the main characters, and what are their roles in this story?
2. What do you think the story is really about?
3. Verse 4 of this passage states that the woman 'was caught in the act of committing adultery'. Why, therefore, was it only the woman, and not the man she was with, who was accused of adultery and brought before Jesus and the crowd?

### IN THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE...

4. Why did Jesus answer in the way he did?
5. Why did the Pharisees and teachers of the law walk away?
6. What does Jesus teach us here about how to respond to survivors of sexual violence in our context?

## Key learning points

- Often, society puts the blame on the survivor and fails to address the harmful behaviour of the perpetrators. It is important not to judge others or label survivors of sexual violence.
- Do not assume that you understand the whole story without listening first to those who have experienced sexual violence. Survivors of sexual violence are not to blame for the violence.

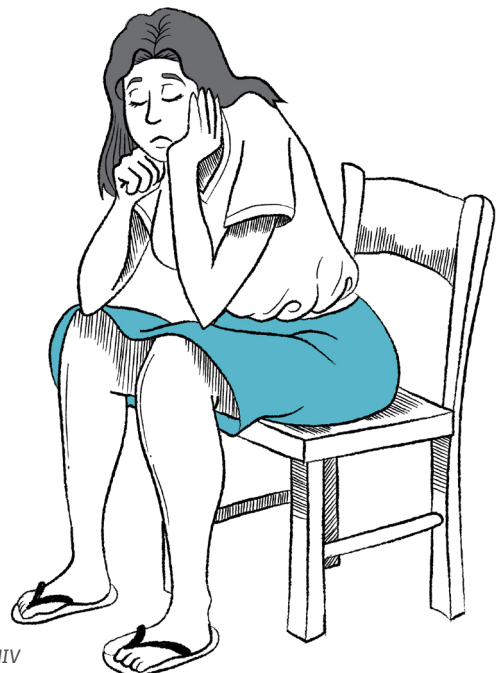
- Seek to engage men and boys to speak out against violence. Do not assume that all men are perpetrators of sexual violence.
- Jesus is our role model in showing us how to treat those being excluded, stigmatised or persecuted because they are seen as being sexually immoral. Jesus shows compassion and mercy to all.

## Prayer points

- Ask God to help you show love and compassion to all those affected by sexual violence. Pray that he will bring healing and restoration to all who are suffering.
- Pray that you will have unconditional love for those individuals who carry the pain of sexual violence. Pray that you and your church will be Christ's hands and feet in providing care and support amid people's pain.
- Pray for peer support groups that can fully engage with and support those in churches and the community who have experienced sexual violence.

## Further passages for reading

- **Judges 19:1–30** A Levite and his concubine
- **Mark 5:24–34** The woman who was healed
- **2 Samuel 11:1–26** David and Bathsheba



\* This Bible study was adapted from *Hand in Hand: Bible Studies to Transform Our Response to HIV*

# 6 Challenging Violence Within Families

## Background information

This study looks at sexual abuse or violence within the family. Many people assume that most sexual violence takes place outside the family, but this is often not the case. Families face many challenges as well as financial and cultural pressures, which can lead the most vulnerable to be subject to violence and abuse (physical, emotional or sexual). This violence often goes on unchallenged, particularly when it happens in families. Too often, no one is willing to speak about this issue. However, we must act to protect those who are vulnerable to abusive behaviour, even when it is within our own families.

## Tips for the facilitator

For this Bible study, read our guidelines on how to facilitate sensitive discussion on page 8. Start by first considering the social and economic pressures that force individuals, especially young people, to consent to sex against their wishes. Divide people into same-sex groups for the discussion and, if you can, have someone with counselling experience to provide support for anyone who wants to talk afterwards.

## Ideas for practical response

Discuss what services and resources there are in the community for survivors of sexual violence.

- Can we challenge the local police to do more?
- Can our churches provide more support and offer counselling services for married couples and families?
- What training opportunities are there for developing counselling skills?

- How can we teach our young people to avoid situations that place them at risk?

Is there any kind of protective network to help vulnerable children in our community? If not, could we establish one?

- How we can work together as a community to prevent abuse and violence, particularly within families, and hold those responsible to account?

## How will this study change us?

### WE WILL KNOW...

- that sexual violence is more common than we may realise and that both women and men experience sexual violence
- that sexual violence can happen within families: perpetrators may be known to the survivors or may be strangers.

### WE WILL BE...

- more aware of how vulnerable young people may be to sexual violence
- encouraged to advocate on behalf of survivors of violence.

### WE WILL ACT...

- to build awareness in young people about abuse and where they can find help if they are subject to violence at home
- to build safe places to talk about the issue and avoid violence being hidden within families.



# 6 The Levite and his Concubine\* (Judges 19:16–29)

There are several examples in the Bible where individuals (often women) are not treated with fairness. However, Jesus teaches that all people, both men and women, should be valued as being created in the image of God and treated fairly. As a church, we need to examine how family structures and cultures can put women in positions of vulnerability, where even the law may not help protect them. We need to reflect on how Jesus would have us treat other people, particularly those who are more vulnerable than us and are facing abuse, whether they are women, girls, men, boys, elderly or young. The church needs to address existing inequalities, particularly around gender, encouraging men to develop a positive masculinity which shows strength through protecting vulnerable people, demonstrating servant leadership and respect for women.

## Discussion

### IN BIBLICAL TIMES...

1. What did the men who pounded at the old man's door want? How does the Bible refer to these men?
2. Why do you think the old man was willing to volunteer the women in the house? Was this not an equally 'disgraceful thing'?
3. What do you feel are the attitudes of the Levite and the old man towards women within their family?
4. How does Jesus' attitude to women compare with that of the men in this passage? Can you think of examples? (John 8:1–11, John 4:7–9)
5. What about the concubine? What would she have felt and how would she have reacted?

### IN THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE...

6. Are there ways in which women in our community are valued less than men? Consider cultural practices: for example, early marriage or offering women's sexual services as a sign of good hospitality. How does this contrast to Christ's care and respect for women?
7. How do these practices, and the inequality between men and women, increase women's vulnerability to violence and abuse within families?
8. What can the church do to support married couples and families going through difficult times and help them address situations of vulnerability and abuse?

9. What are our attitudes towards those who have been abused? Do we offer them our support or stigmatise and reject them?

## Key learning points

- The church has a responsibility to protect the vulnerable, to speak up against injustice and provide care and support for those who have been abused (Micah 6:8), even when these situations are happening within families.
- The church can support families facing difficult times, providing financial and emotional help and enabling a safe environment, free from abusive behaviour.
- An individual who has been raped or experienced sexual violence may need different types of support and care, including HIV testing, counselling, prayer support, acceptance, emotional support, reassurance and time to talk confidentially with an understanding person.
- Women are not expendable objects and deserve equal respect and honour (Ephesians 5:25).
- We need to challenge stigma and discrimination against individuals who have been abused, and instead offer them support in meeting their emotional, physical and spiritual needs.

## Prayer points

- Pray that God will reveal situations of violence against individuals in our communities and help us to speak out openly against sexual violence.
- Pray that the church will take responsibility in addressing issues of sexual violence and will love and support survivors.

## Further passages for reading

- **1 Corinthians 6:19–20** Our body as a temple of the Holy Spirit
- **Matthew 1:18–25** Joseph's treatment of and respect for Mary
- **John 8:1–11** Jesus and the adulterous woman
- **Genesis 19:1–11** Lot offers his daughters to be raped to protect his guests (who were angels)



# 7 The Perpetrators of Violence

## Background information

The purpose of this study is to start to think about the perpetrators of violence: what leads them to acts of abuse and violence? This study should also encourage us to think of what systems we have in our communities to bring these perpetrators to justice.

## Tips for the facilitator

Start the discussion by considering the social and economic pressures that force individuals, especially young people, to consent to sex against their wishes. Divide people into same-sex groups for the discussion. Treat the subject with great sensitivity as people share their experiences.

## Ideas for practical response

Discuss what services and resources are available in your community to address these issues

- How can we challenge the local police to do more?
- What counselling services and training is available to rehabilitate perpetrators?
- How can our society ensure that men are held accountable for their actions?
- Can our churches provide more support and offer counselling services?
- What training opportunities are there for developing counselling skills?
- How can we teach our young people to avoid situations that place them at risk?

Discuss whether any kind of protective network could be established to help protect vulnerable children in our communities.

## How will this study change us?

### WE WILL KNOW...

- that girls are sometimes targeted by rich, older men who exploit their vulnerability for gifts and special treatment for sexual favours
- that sexual violence is more common than we may realise, that both women and men experience it and that it can happen within families.

### WE WILL BE...

- conscious of the vulnerability of young people to sexual violence
- encouraged to advocate on behalf of survivors of sexual violence.

### WE WILL ACT...

- to open communication channels with key actors in the community and facilitate dialogues with perpetrators
- to ensure violence, particularly sexual violence, is not hidden within families.



# 7 The Story of David and Bathsheba\* (2 Samuel 11:1–27)

This Bible story tells of King David and his lust watching Bathsheba bathing one afternoon. He then made a plan to sleep with her in order to fulfil his heart's desire, even though he knew that she belonged to her husband, Uriah. David uses his power to manipulate the situation in order to satisfy his desire. The text shows a step-by-step execution of David's plan that ends in the death of Bathsheba's husband.

## Discussion

### IN BIBLICAL TIMES...

1. Who are the main characters, and what are their roles, visible and invisible, in this story?
2. What do you think the story is really about?
3. What does this story say about perpetrators of sexual violence?
4. What does David do and say about his sin after realising his guilt?
5. What about justice for Bathsheba and her family? What does this passage tell us about the people in society who are to hold men accountable (which is Nathan's role)? How does the perpetrator deal with these consequences?

### IN THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE...

6. Does this situation happen in our context (at home, in the family, etc)?
7. What are the power relations between the victim and the perpetrator in this type of sexual violence?
8. What are the risks of sexual violence presented by the situation Bathsheba finds herself in? Is she able to refuse the king?
9. What does this text teach us about how to respond to survivors of sexual violence in our context?
10. Perpetrators of sexual violence can be seemingly respectable members of society, such as 'sugar daddies' (older, richer men). These men are often the perpetrators of sexual violence against young teenagers, who are often from poor families. What can be done to address this?

## Key learning points

- It is important to know the boundaries that are often broken when sexual violence occurs.
- Do not judge young/under-aged survivors of sexual violence. They all need non-judgemental support, particularly from their parents.
- Do not assume that you understand the whole story without listening first to those who have experienced sexual violence.
- Seek to engage men, women, girls and boys to speak out against sexual violence.

## Prayer points

- Pray for all parents who are faced with challenges of raising children in ever-changing social contexts.
- Ask God to help you show love and compassion to all those affected by sexual violence. Pray that he will bring healing and restoration to all who are suffering. Pray that you and your church will be Christ's hands and feet in providing care and support in response to people's pain.
- Pray for peer support groups that can fully engage with and support those in churches and the community who have experienced sexual violence.
- Pray that fathers will become engaged in showing the loving and parental care that young men and women are looking for.

## Further passages for reading

- **Matthew 7:1-6** Judging others
- **James 2:1-13** Favouritism forbidden
- **Matthew 22:34-40** The greatest commandment

\* This Bible study was adapted from *Hand in Hand: Bible Studies to Transform Our Response to HIV*



# Human Trafficking and its Impact on Sexual and Gender-based Violence

## Background information

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery. There is a close relationship between human trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence. Individuals who have been trafficked suffer from different kinds of violence and abuse – physical, emotional and sexual.

This Bible study looks at human trafficking by members of the same family. Many people think that human trafficking takes place outside the family, but this is often not the case. The purpose of this study is to create awareness that this phenomenon happens in our communities. We must be alert to the signs of vulnerability in our communities and bring an end to it.

## Tips for the facilitator

For this study, we recommend you follow our guidelines on facilitating sensitive discussions on page 8. Widen the discussion by considering first the social, economic and personal pressures that force individuals, especially young people, to be subject to human trafficking.

It is important to create a conducive environment that allows those who know about this better to share and those who are not familiar to ask as many questions as they can to strengthen their knowledge base and open their eyes to see the impact of human trafficking locally.

## Ideas for practical response

Discuss what the vulnerabilities faced by young people in the community are that could lead them to be trafficked.

- Can we challenge the local police to do more? Can our churches provide more support to families and to build awareness of this phenomenon?
- How can we teach our young people to avoid situations that place them at risk?

Discuss whether any kind of protective network could be established to help protect vulnerable children in our communities.

## How will this study change us?

### WE WILL KNOW...

- that human trafficking has happened for a long time and it still affects us today
- that human trafficking may lead to sexual violence and can happen within families: perpetrators may be known to the survivors or may be strangers.

### WE WILL BE...

- more aware of how vulnerable young people may be to human trafficking and sexual violence
- encouraged to advocate on behalf of survivors of violence and human trafficking.

### WE WILL ACT...

- to create awareness of human trafficking and systematic grooming of vulnerable people
- to ensure that reporting systems are in place for communities to take action against human trafficking and sexual or gender-based violence.



Look at this image. Who is the figure of authority in this image? Reflect on the fragile nature of relationships and how the misuse of power can turn to violence and abuse.

# 8 The story of Joseph (Genesis 37:18–36, 39:1–20)

In these Bible passages, we read about how the brothers of Joseph made a plan to sell him to a merchant, how Joseph is bought by Potiphar and how he is made vulnerable to sexual violence and abuse in that household.

## Discussion

### IN BIBLICAL TIMES...

1. Who are the main characters, and what are their roles, visible and invisible, in this story?
2. Does this kind of thing happen in our own context? How?
3. What do you think the story is really about?
4. The heading of this Bible passage is 'Joseph is sold by his brothers'. Can this be considered a form of slavery or abduction?
5. What happens to Joseph in Genesis 39?

### IN THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE...

6. Can you think of how Joseph's story would be if it was happening now? What would be different/the same?
7. What can be done to stop the spread of human trafficking?
8. How does this text help us in addressing human trafficking?
9. How do we respond to the needs of survivors of sexual violence and human trafficking in our context?

## Key learning points

- Human trafficking is an age-old phenomenon that needs to be dealt with. Perpetrators need to be challenged and justice to be done to protect the vulnerable survivors of human trafficking.
- It is important not to judge others or label them according to their behaviour and it is important to create safer spaces in dealing with these cases and the families of those involved.

- Do not assume that you understand the whole story without listening first to those who have experienced human trafficking and sexual violence. Survivors are not to blame.
- Seek to engage men and boys to speak out against violence. Do not start with the assumption that all men are perpetrators of sexual violence. There is a serious need for appropriate role models who will be compassionate and willing to expose human trafficking and sexual violence and able to show compassion to those affected.

## Prayer points

- Pray for families who do not know where their children are because of human trafficking.
- Ask God to help you show love and compassion to all those affected by human trafficking and sexual violence. Pray that he will bring healing and restoration to all who are suffering.
- Pray for peer support groups that can fully engage with and support those in churches and the community who have experienced human trafficking and sexual violence.

## Further passages for reading

- **Joshua 2:1–24** Rahab and the spies
- **Psalms 137:1–9** 'By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept...'



# 9 A healthy Marriage Leads to a Healthy Family

## Background information

In this study, we look at the Bible's teaching on relationships between men and women in the context of marriage. Marriage is God's idea, not humankind's. This Bible study helps us to learn from Paul about the importance of a strong and godly marriage and how this is the foundation for a healthy family. The Genesis account of the beginning of marriage (Genesis 2:24–25) ends with a statement that expresses four elements that should be part of every marriage:

- **CUTTING OFF** 'A man shall leave his father and mother' – a new partnership occurs through marriage
- **BONDING** 'And be united to his wife' – the idea here is that of gluing or permanent bonding
- **UNITY** 'And they will become one flesh' – the two becoming one
- **INTIMACY** 'They were both naked... and felt no shame' – the absence of self-consciousness enabled the first couple to enjoy one another without any sense of embarrassment or rejection

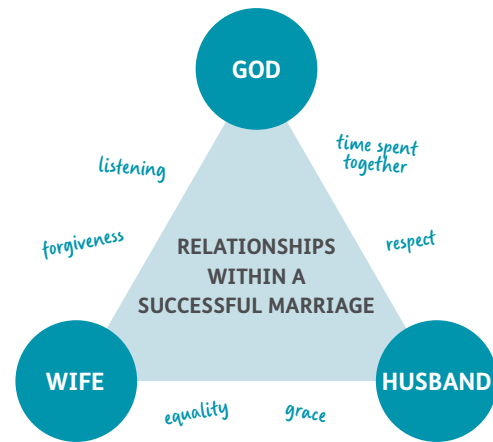
## Tips for the facilitator

Take time to discuss what makes marriages work. Here are some suggested building blocks for good marriages to encourage discussion: lifelong commitment, shared identity, faithfulness, clear roles, unreserved love, mutual submission, sexual fulfillment, open communication, equality, forgiveness, grace, listening and respect. Husband and wife should learn to be relaxed when talking about their relationship and about sex in the early years of their marriage. This will make it much easier to be open and relaxed when talking with their children about sex in the future.



## Ideas for practical response

Divorce, alcohol and drugs are just some of the ways people try to deal with difficulties in their marriage. However, all of these can make a bad situation worse. There is another way – a better way. It takes three to make a marriage succeed: a husband, a wife and God.



## How will this study change us?

### WE WILL KNOW...

- that building strong, godly families helps to build strong societies and nations
- that emphasising faithfulness, trust, mutual respect and the dignity of both partners ensures families are stable and provides a positive atmosphere for raising children.

### WE WILL BE...

- encouraged in our understanding of the value and depth of the marriage relationship
- reminded that God lives and abides in families, no matter what they are going through.

### WE WILL ACT...

- to mirror the love of God to society in modelling good relationships, repairing broken relationships and mentoring children and young people.

# 9 'Submit to One Another Out of Reverence for Christ'\* (Ephesians 5:21–33)

Paul uses this passage to remind the Ephesians about what a godly marriage means, at a time when there was considerable sexual immorality and where marriages were often business arrangements. He then discusses the relationship between children and parents, highlighting the importance of family. It is important to see these verses in the context of the entire passage.

## Discussion

### IN BIBLICAL TIMES...

1. What is the purpose of relationships? Why has God created marriage?
2. Why do you think Paul needed to talk to the Ephesians about what a good marriage was?
3. What does Paul highlight as the important qualities of a good marriage?
4. What does it mean to submit to one another within a marriage relationship?
5. What does it mean for a man to love his wife as Christ loves the church? What does it mean for a wife to submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ?

### IN THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE...

6. What are the cultural and current practices in our community that can impact negatively or positively on marriage and family?
7. What are the consequences of a broken marriage?
8. What is the impact of sexual violence on families?
9. What will help men and women to remain faithful in their marriage?
10. Do you think husbands and wives today should follow these biblical principles of a strong marriage? And, if so, why?
11. What is the role of the family in society? How can the church help families to be strong and healthy?

## Key learning points

- Paul teaches that a husband should love his wife as Christ loved the church. Both husband and wife need to submit to each other.



- Parents need a good biblical foundation in their marriage to build a strong and healthy Christian family.
- Marriage requires mutual respect, trust and faithfulness. The dignity of both partners should be upheld.
- Sexual violence has a devastating effect on the family. It is vital for a family to be strong and healthy with its foundation in Christ in order to face challenges.
- Repairing broken relationships involves a process of repentance and forgiveness, and considers the possibility of making restitution.

## Prayer points

- Pray that partners will understand and model biblical marriage.
- Pray for families affected by sexual violence.
- Pray for children being raised in unstable family settings

## Further passages for reading

- **Genesis 1:26–28** God created man and woman and blessed them both
- **Colossians 3:18–21** Instructions for Christian households
- **1 Peter 3:1–7** Guidance for wives and husbands
- **Hebrews 13:4** Faithfulness in marriage

\* This Bible study was adapted from *Hand in Hand: Bible Studies to Transform Our Response to HIV*

# 10 Demonstrating Compassion

## Background information

In this study, we look at how Jesus showed compassion to a sick woman and healed her. Everyone affected by sexual violence has different, and often very considerable, practical, emotional and spiritual needs – all of which need different resources and responses from within our church. It is important for church leaders to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond to these needs and to share this with other church members and communities. It is very important to listen to those who have experienced sexual violence, to truly understand their needs and provide an opportunity for them to feel safe and supported.



## Tips for the facilitator

It is important to allow participants who have survived sexual violence to share their feelings and views about their experiences. The facilitator needs to be aware of his/her own bias in relation to perceptions towards sexual violence. This awareness is important because we all have our own ideas about sexual violence that need to be challenged; if we do not, we will put at risk our work with survivors who need a non-judgemental attitude (see more on pages 44–49).

If the participants share painful and traumatic experiences of sexual violence, the facilitator needs to handle this carefully and with sensitivity. If possible, you could arrange for a skilled counsellor to be available in case the level of trauma requires professional help, or have some information of services in the community available for them. You can find more information on how to facilitate sensitive discussions on page 8 and information on supporting survivors of sexual violence on pages 44–50.

## Ideas for practical response

Help people to be clear about the consequences of stigma, discrimination and denial in their churches and communities. Discuss ways of dealing with each of these.

## How will this study change us?

### WE WILL KNOW...

- that Jesus revealed new truths about how we should love our neighbour and how essential it is for us to show God's love to others experiencing illness and suffering
- that fear can make stigma worse.

### WE WILL BE...

- more compassionate towards others
- more aware and informed about the causes of violence and the fact that no one deserves to be treated with violence

### WE WILL ACT...

- by responding with compassionate support rather than judging people's personal and sexual lifestyle or the choices they make for their survival
- to challenge self-stigma (the feeling that we are unworthy, shameful, and deserve what we get).

# 10 Jesus Heals a Sick Woman (Mark 5:24–34)

This is a story full of pain, about the struggle for healing of a woman who has been suffering with a hemorrhage for 12 years despite treatment under various doctors. She has spent all her money on trying to find a cure and is no better for it; in fact, she is getting worse. She has heard about Jesus, and comes up through the crowd to touch his cloak. Jesus' response is: 'Your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.'

## Discussion

### IN BIBLICAL TIMES...

1. Who are the main people in the story?
2. What do you think the story is really about?
3. Why did Jesus ask publicly about who touched him in the way he did?
4. How was this woman perceived by the Pharisees and teachers of the law?

### IN THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE...

5. Why might survivors of sexual violence not speak out about their experiences?
6. How could the church become a place of acceptance, where those who have experienced sexual violence can speak openly about their experiences?
7. What is preventing the church from speaking out against sexual violence? If it is lack of understanding, how might the church learn more about sexual violence?

## Key learning points

- Do not rush to judge others, for all of us have fallen short of the glory of God and sinned in many ways (Romans 3:23–24).
- Women are often blamed for sexual violence while little or nothing is said of the males who perpetrate sexual violence. It is NOT the survivor's fault if they experience sexual violence.

- The church has a responsibility to lead efforts to challenge stigma and discrimination.
- If people living with sexual violence suffer from stigma in the community and church, they may not receive the medical attention they need, in particular medication to prevent or treat HIV and sexually transmitted diseases

## Prayer points

- Pray that we will rebuild our families and relationships that are torn apart because of greed and unforgiveness. We pray for the restoration of broken relationships with God's unconditional love.
- We pray for survivors of sexual violence to be touched by God's unconditional love, care and compassion. Pray that they will still know that God is their father in the midst of facing everyday life challenges.

## Further passages for reading

- **John 4:1–26** Jesus and the Samaritan woman
- **John 5:1–15** Jesus heals a paralysed man
- **Matthew 9:35–38** Jesus has compassion for people with all kinds of troubles





# 11 Seeking Justice and Advocating for Human Rights

## Background information

Justice is not simply about punishing people – it is about putting things right. Advocacy means speaking with and on behalf of others, to explain their needs and concerns to those who have the power to address these needs and create change. We have a biblical mandate to care for marginalised people in society and to challenge injustice. This Bible study looks at the example of Nehemiah who as a leader saw a need in his community and petitioned those with authority and power to act.

## Tips for the facilitator

As a leader, Nehemiah was personally involved as part of the solution, joining in with the physical work. But he couldn't do it alone – he needed all the community to help build the wall. Discuss what approaches are needed to promote effective leadership and advocacy. Some suggestions would be: clear understanding, persistence, prayer, passion and effective communication.

## Ideas for practical response

Discuss how we can best encourage people in our churches to act like Nehemiah in the context of preventing and responding to sexual violence. What attributes do we need as Christians to engage in effective advocacy for those who have experienced sexual violence? How can we encourage and support survivors to take on leadership roles and take part in advocacy?

## How will this study change us?

### WE WILL KNOW...

- the key importance of the church in demonstrating clear leadership in responding to sexual violence
- the important role of advocacy in mobilising resources for those impacted by sexual violence
- how best to help people understand their potential for leadership and advocacy roles in responding to sexual violence.

### WE WILL BE...

- equipped to reflect on leadership attitudes and how leaders speak out against sexual violence
- mobilised to play a role in advocating for justice for those who have experienced sexual violence.

### WE WILL ACT...

- to encourage individuals, families and those who have experienced sexual violence to consider their potential in taking up leadership roles and advocate for the rights of survivors of sexual violence
- to create peer support groups for survivors, enable a space where they can find healing and restoration and speak out about their experiences, and advocate for the rights of survivors of sexual violence.

## ILLUSTRATION STORY

**Introduce the topic with this illustration story. Discuss how Chantal's story is similar to Nehemiah's. How did the people of the church help her? How does this story encourage us to take small steps to support those who have experienced sexual violence and how can we work to prevent it from happening again?**

*Chantal is 15 years old and has two little children. She left her home village after she experienced abuse from her primary school teacher and her family rejected her. She went to her auntie's house and stayed there to give birth to her child. She started work in a home as a house-maid. However, one day when she was working alone in the house, the man of the household entered the room she was cleaning, locked the door and abused her sexually. Afterwards, he told her to leave immediately and not come back. She was too ashamed to tell anyone. When she started to show signs*

*of a new pregnancy, her auntie started asking questions. She saw that Chantal was sad, was not eating much and sometimes she could hear her cry. Her auntie spoke to one of the leaders in her church about the change in Chantal since she had stopped working as a house-maid. They decided to visit the house where Chantal used to work. Soon, they discovered the truth of what had happened. The church leadership offered Chantal counselling. They found a little money for her and helped her find another job. Seeing that the perpetrator was still walking freely around the village and knowing this was not right, the local pastor went to talk to the police to denounce him. Eventually the perpetrator was found guilty and sent to prison..*

# 11 'Do not be afraid of them... fight for your families...'<sup>\*</sup> (Nehemiah 4:1–20, 6:15–16)

In this story, the Israelites face the problem of a broken wall, which leaves them vulnerable to attack. Walls are built to protect homes and communities. If a wall is weak, broken or cracked, the house may collapse. In the same way, our communities have different kinds of 'walls and structures'. Without them, our communities become more vulnerable to attack. Nehemiah saw the need in his community, and he advocated on behalf of his people to those who were powerful and could help. First, he went to God in prayer. Then he spoke to the people in authority who had the power and resources that were needed, before he took action.

## Discussion

### IN BIBLICAL TIMES...

1. What were the main needs and problems that the Israelites were facing?
2. What leadership qualities did Nehemiah show? Who did he ask to help him?
3. How did other people respond? Why do you think they acted in this way?
4. How did Nehemiah respond to the threats he and the Israelites faced in building the wall?
5. What sort of qualities and practices make someone a good or a bad leader? Consider Jesus' model of servant leadership.

### IN THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE...

6. What are our 'broken walls' or vulnerabilities in our community? What are the problems that need to be addressed?
7. As leaders, how do we use our abilities to respond to the issues facing our community?
8. As individuals, what kind of leadership are we called to show in regard to sexual violence? What do we expect of those who are in leadership?
9. What does the law say about sexual violence in our country? What are the rights of people in our family, church and community?

10. How can we as leaders in our community stand up for justice, truth and the rights of our family and community members?
11. Like Nehemiah, do we need others to support us as we speak out about sexual violence? What kind of support and protection do we need?

## Key learning points

- We need God's direction both to provide good leadership and to identify issues that we may need to advocate for.
- The church is well placed to challenge local government and organisations to take more action to prevent and respond to sexual violence.
- Each of us has a responsibility in accompanying, supporting and standing in the gap for those who need us.
- We all need commitment, discernment and empowerment to provide effective leadership and advocacy about sexual violence in our communities.

## Prayer points

- Pray that God will show us how we can rely on him for strength, understanding and grace to repair every situation where leadership is lacking or weak and where we face 'damaged walls'.
- Pray for those who care for children who have lost parents, or whose parents are sick, and who are likely to be left without protectors and providers.
- As Christians, we are all called to speak up for those in need. Pray for guidance on how we can all follow Nehemiah's example and take the lead in meeting needs in our communities.

## Further passages for reading

- **Isaiah 6:8** The prophet Isaiah responds to God's calling
- **Micah 6:8** God calls us to act justly and to show mercy
- **James 2:14–17** Practical faith revealed in action

<sup>\*</sup> This Bible study was adapted from *Hand in hand: Bible studies to transform our response to HIV*

# 12 Responding to Practical Needs

## Background information

There is an increasing need for church leaders to understand the importance of supporting people in need within their communities. Not just people who have survived sexual violence, but also their children, their families, and their husbands or wives. These people have different practical, emotional and spiritual needs – all of which need different resources and responses from within our churches.

## Tips for the facilitator

Encourage people to see that everyone has the capacity to help each other. Even if we are poor or weak or sick, we still have something to offer. For example, even if we lack money, we could still give our time to sit and listen to survivors' experiences. We could also accompany an individual when they go to the health clinic, to provide emotional support.

## Ideas for practical response

This study encourages us not just to discuss situations and needs, but also to take direct action to meet those needs. Discuss who around us is hungry, thirsty, homeless, lacking adequate clothes or in prison – in both physical and spiritual terms. If no one is adequately meeting their needs, what can we do ourselves?

## How will this study change us?

### WE WILL KNOW...

- that we all called to care for and take responsibility for one another.
- whatever good we do to survivors of sexual violence, we are serving God.

### WE WILL BE...

- given a deeper understanding of the practical care and support that others may need in the context of sexual violence.
- aware of other people's physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

### WE WILL ACT...

- to provide support in meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those in our community impacted by sexual violence
- to mobilise our churches to meet the needs of people who have survived sexual violence.



# 12 'I was hungry and you gave me food...' (Matthew 25:37-40)

This powerful passage comes just before the Last Supper and before Jesus was arrested. It is almost his final teaching point to his disciples and one that applies just as much to us all today. In this powerful and practical passage, Jesus talks about meeting the needs of people who are often forgotten or shunned by society, for example those in prison. His listeners were surprised by his words.

## Discussion

### IN BIBLICAL TIMES...

1. What is this passage saying?
2. Who are the different people involved and what are they doing?
3. What does this passage tell us about how we as Christians should care for those in need?

### IN THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE...

4. In our culture, who do we expect to care for the sick, and why? In this passage, whose responsibility is it to look after them?
5. What are the needs of those who have survived sexual violence? Consider their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Do people need care only when they are sick?
6. How can we as Christians, both as individuals and as a church community, meet these needs and provide practical care and support for each other?
7. Do children have different needs from adults? Explain why. How can we provide care and support for vulnerable children in our community, for example those who are orphaned or those who are caring for parents who are sick?
8. We may feel we have little to offer to help others, but in this passage, Jesus calls everyone to account for how they have cared for others. Explore the ways in which we could use what little we do have to help others.



## Key learning points

- Are there people in our community who are excluded, or whose needs are ignored – for example, because of their age, gender or life experience?
- What does our society lose because of the way we treat these people?
- How can we transform this situation, and ensure that all people can participate fully in the life of our community?

## Prayer points

- Pray that we can take this message to heart and be mobilised to meet the needs of others, however uncomfortable we may feel about their situation and backgrounds. God's love is unconditional and ours should be too.

## Further passages for reading

- 2 Corinthians 5:1-3 Our longing for heaven
- 2 Corinthians 5:15 We should not live just for ourselves

# Bible Passages

Scripture quotations taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version.  
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used with the permission of Hodder and Stoughton Ltd.

## Study 1      2 Samuel 13:1–22

---

1 In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David. 2 Amnon became so obsessed with his sister Tamar that he made himself ill. She was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her.

3 Now Amnon had an adviser named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man. 4 He asked Amnon, 'Why do you, the king's son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won't you tell me?' Amnon said to him, 'I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.'

5 'Go to bed and pretend to be ill,' Jonadab said. 'When your father comes to see you, say to him, "I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand."'

6 So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, 'I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight, so I may eat from her hand.'

7 David sent word to Tamar at the palace: 'Go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him.' 8 So Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was lying down. She took some dough, kneaded it, made the bread in his sight and baked it. 9 Then she took the pan and served him the bread, but he refused to eat.

'Send everyone out of here,' Amnon said. So everyone left him. 10 Then Amnon said to Tamar, 'Bring the food here into my bedroom so I may eat from your hand.' And Tamar took the bread she had prepared and brought it to her brother Amnon in his bedroom. 11 But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, 'Come to bed with me, my sister.'

12 'No, my brother!' she said to him. 'Don't force me! Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing. 13 What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you.' 14 But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her.

15 Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, 'Get up and get out!'

16 'No!' she said to him. 'Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me.' But he refused to listen to her. 17 He called his personal servant and said, 'Get this woman out of my sight and bolt the door after her.' 18 So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. She was wearing an ornate robe, for this was the kind of garment the virgin daughters of the king wore. 19 Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornate robe she was wearing. She put her hands on her head and went away, weeping aloud as she went.

20 Her brother Absalom said to her, 'Has that Amnon, your brother, been with you? Be quiet for now, my sister; he is your brother. Don't take this thing to heart.' And Tamar lived in her brother Absalom's house, a desolate woman.

21 When King David heard all this, he was furious. 22 And Absalom never said a word to Amnon, either good or bad; he hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar.

## Study 2

### John 4:1–30

---

Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John 2 although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. 3 So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

4 Now he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?' 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9 The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

10 Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'

11 'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?'

13 Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'

15 The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.'

16 He told her, 'Go, call your husband and come back.' 17 'I have no husband,' she replied. Jesus said to her, 'You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.'

19 'Sir,' the woman said, 'I can see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.'

21 'Woman,' Jesus replied, 'believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.'

25 The woman said, 'I know that Messiah' (called Christ) 'is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.' 26 Then Jesus declared, 'I, the one speaking to you—I am he.'

27 Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, 'What do you want?' or 'Why are you talking with her?'

28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?' 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

## Study 3

### 1 Corinthians 12:12–27

---

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

15 Now if the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’

22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

## Study 4

### Genesis 1:26–28

---

26 Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’

27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’

## Study 5

### John 8:1–11

---

1 but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?’ 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, ‘Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.’ 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’

11 ‘No one, sir,’ she said. ‘Then neither do I condemn you,’ Jesus declared. ‘Go now and leave your life of sin.’

## Study 6

### Judges 19:16–29

---

16 That evening an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, who was living in Gibeah (the inhabitants of the place were Benjamites), came in from his work in the fields. 17 When he looked and saw the traveler in the city square, the old man asked, ‘Where are you going? Where did you come from?’

18 He answered, ‘We are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim where I live. I have been to Bethlehem in Judah and now I am going to the house of the Lord. No one has taken me in for the night. 19 We have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine for ourselves your servants—me, the woman and the young man with us. We don’t need anything.’

20 ‘You are welcome at my house,’ the old man said. ‘Let me supply whatever you need. Only don’t spend the night in the square.’ 21 So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink.

22 While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, ‘Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him.’

23 The owner of the house went outside and said to them, ‘No, my friends, don’t be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don’t do this outrageous thing. 24 Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But as for this man, don’t do such an outrageous thing.’

25 But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go. 26 At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, fell down at the door and lay there until daylight.

27 When her master got up in the morning and opened the door of the house and stepped out to continue on his way, there lay his concubine, fallen in the doorway of the house, with her hands on the threshold. 28 He said to her, ‘Get up; let’s go.’ But there was no answer. Then the man put her on his donkey and set out for home.

29 When he reached home, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, limb by limb, into twelve parts and sent them into all the areas of Israel.

## Study 7

### 2 Samuel 11:1–17

---

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king’s men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

2 One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, 3 and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, ‘She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.’ 4 Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home. 5 The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, ‘I am pregnant.’

6 So David sent this word to Joab: ‘Send me Uriah the Hittite.’ And Joab sent him to David. 7 When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. 8 Then David said to Uriah, ‘Go down to your house and wash your feet.’ So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. 9 But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master’s servants and did not go down to his house.

10 David was told, ‘Uriah did not go home.’ So he asked Uriah, ‘Haven’t you just come from a military campaign? Why didn’t you go home?’

11 Uriah said to David, ‘The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents,[a] and my commander Joab and my lord’s men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!’



12 Then David said to him, “Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back.” So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. 13 At David’s invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master’s servants; he did not go home.

14 In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. 15 In it he wrote, “Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die.”

16 So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. 17 When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David’s army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died.

## Study 8

### Genesis 37:18–36 and 39:1–20

---

#### Genesis 37:18–36

So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. 18 But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

19 “Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. 20 “Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.”

21 When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. “Let’s not take his life,” he said. 22 “Don’t shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don’t lay a hand on him.” Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing— 24 and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

25 As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

26 Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? 27 Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed.

28 So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels[a] of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

29 When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. 30 He went back to his brothers and said, “The boy isn’t there! Where can I turn now?”

31 Then they got Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. 32 They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, “We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son’s robe.”

33 He recognized it and said, “It is my son’s robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces.”

34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. 35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. “No,” he said, “I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave.” So his father wept for him.

36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard.

#### Genesis 39:1–20

1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.

2 The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. 3 When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, 4 Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he

entrusted to his care everything he owned. 5 From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. 6 So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate. Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, 7 and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

8 But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. 9 No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" 10 And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

11 One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. 12 She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house. 13 When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, 14 she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. 15 When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

16 She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. 17 Then she told him this story: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. 18 But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house." 19 When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, "This is how your slave treated me," he burned with anger. 20 Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined.

## Study 9 Ephesians 5:21–33

---

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— 30 for we are members of his body. 31 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

## Study 10 Mark 5:24–34

---

24 So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. 25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26 She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 because she thought, 'If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.' 29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

30 At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, 'Who touched my clothes?'

31 'You see the people crowding against you,' his disciples answered, 'and yet you can ask, "Who touched me?"'

32 But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. 33 Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. 34 He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.'

## Study 11 Nehemiah 4:1–20 and 6:15–16

---

### Nehemiah 4:1–20

1 When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews,<sup>2</sup> and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, ‘What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?’

3 Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, ‘What they are building—even a fox climbing up on it would break down their wall of stones!’ 4 Hear us, our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. 5 Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders.

6 So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart. 7 But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the people of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem’s walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. 8 They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. 9 But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.

10 Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, ‘The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall.’ 11 Also our enemies said, ‘Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work.’ 12 Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, ‘Wherever you turn, they will attack us.’ 13 Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. 14 After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, ‘Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.’

15 When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to our own work. 16 From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows and armor. The officers posted themselves behind all the people of Judah 17 who were building the wall. Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, 18 and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. But the man who sounded the trumpet stayed with me.

19 Then I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, ‘The work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. 20 Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!’

### Nehemiah 6:15–16

15 So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. 16 When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.

## Study 12 Matthew 25:37–40

---

37 ‘Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

40 ‘The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”’

# Practical Guidelines for Responding to Sexual Violence

This section provides practical guidelines on key areas that we need to consider in preventing and responding to sexual violence:

A	Mapping medical and legal services .....	44
B	Confidentiality .....	46
C	How to handle a disclosure of sexual violence .....	46
D	Supporting survivors of sexual violence and their families .....	47
E	Listening to survivors .....	48
F	Knowing your rights .....	50

## A. MAPPING MEDICAL AND LEGAL SERVICES

### Why is this important?

- It is important to note that sexual violence is a criminal offence in many countries.
- There are special medical and legal procedures that need to be followed in reporting this type of offence and there are precautions that need to be taken seriously

There will be occasions when the church needs to refer and support survivors of sexual violence if the individual:

- chooses to make a formal report of sexual violence to the police
- needs to seek medical support for any injuries sustained in the attack.

It is important for the church to understand what services exist within their communities so they can help the individual get the care and support they may need. The church can continue to provide support for the individual and listen to their needs even if they receive professional care and support.

### Please Note:

Individuals who have survived sexual violence should receive medical attention within 72 to 120 hours of the attack, to ensure they receive treatment to prevent HIV and sexually transmitted diseases. Even if this timeframe has elapsed, please ensure the individual receives medical treatment immediately.

### ACTIVITY 1 (for individuals and churches)

Start by asking the following questions to improve your knowledge of what services are available in your community for survivors of sexual violence.

### MEDICAL SERVICES

- Where is the local health clinic?
- Does the clinic have trained nurses and doctors who offer medical attention to individuals who have survived sexual violence?

### Please Note:

It is important to understand that physical evidence can be found on a survivor's body following an attack. If the attack has just happened and if the survivor can receive immediate medical attention, this may assist in a legal case against the perpetrator.

## LEGAL SERVICES

- Where is the local police station?
- Does the local police station have someone responsible for handling cases of sexual violence (including rape cases)?
- What are the laws against sexual violence in your country?
- Find out what happens when a case of sexual violence is reported to the police. What evidence is needed to take the case to court? How long does this process take? Where is the nearest court that deals with cases of sexual violence?

### Please Note:

Legal services vary from country to country and sometimes the legal system does not work the way it should. This may be an opportunity to advocate for justice.

## SURVIVOR CARE AND SUPPORT

- Are there counselling services available for survivors to receive counselling?
- Are there 'safe houses' or 'transit houses' in the community where survivors of sexual violence are able to stay while awaiting medical treatment or during the legal process?

### Please Note:

Sometimes, the locations of 'safe houses' and 'transit houses' are kept secret to provide a safe and secure environment for survivors who may be in danger. Please respect the confidentiality of these locations.

## WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO?

- As a church, how can you develop relationships with people within each of the services mentioned above?
- Are there practical things the church can do to support survivors, including providing food or counselling, or inviting them to join savings and loans groups that the church runs?
- Raise awareness in your church about sexual violence.
- Train individuals to participate in the following activity, helping them to understand how they can respond to sexual violence.

### ACTIVITY 2

(for individuals and groups)

**If you see signs of sexual violence and you think that a child or an adult you know may be exposed to sexual violence, what should you do?**

Before you answer, think about what is best for the child or adult, your safety, the type of abuse, how to respect the survivor's dignity and privacy, and the services where you live.

- Who could you talk to? Should you report the abuse? Why? Or why not? What services exist for the survivor? The end goals are to stop sexual violence and get appropriate care and support for the survivor.
- In a group, discuss the steps you would take and list them on a piece of flipchart paper.
- Explore with your group any personal or professional barriers you might experience (i.e. something that may get in your way or stop you from doing something).

## B. CONFIDENTIALITY

### Why is this important?

Sexual violence is a very intimate act of violating the other person, so confidentiality must be respected in dealing with such cases. The aim must be to create a safe environment where the survivor of sexual violence is free to express themselves without fear of being judged by those who should be offering help and support. Respectful confidentiality creates opportunities for healing and restoration of dignity.

### GUIDELINES

- The church should seek to treat people with dignity and respect.
- Gossip within the church is sometimes a challenge. It fuels stigma and discrimination instead of the church providing an open, safe space where people can find care and support.
- If someone shares their personal experience with you, do not make promises you cannot keep.
- It is important to share with the individual that there may be limits to keeping confidentiality – for example, if a child has been abused by a parent and is in a dangerous environment at home, there is a legal responsibility to report incidents to the police or social services in some countries. Find out what responsibilities you would have in such a scenario in your country and what you would have to report.

## C. HOW TO HANDLE A DISCLOSURE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

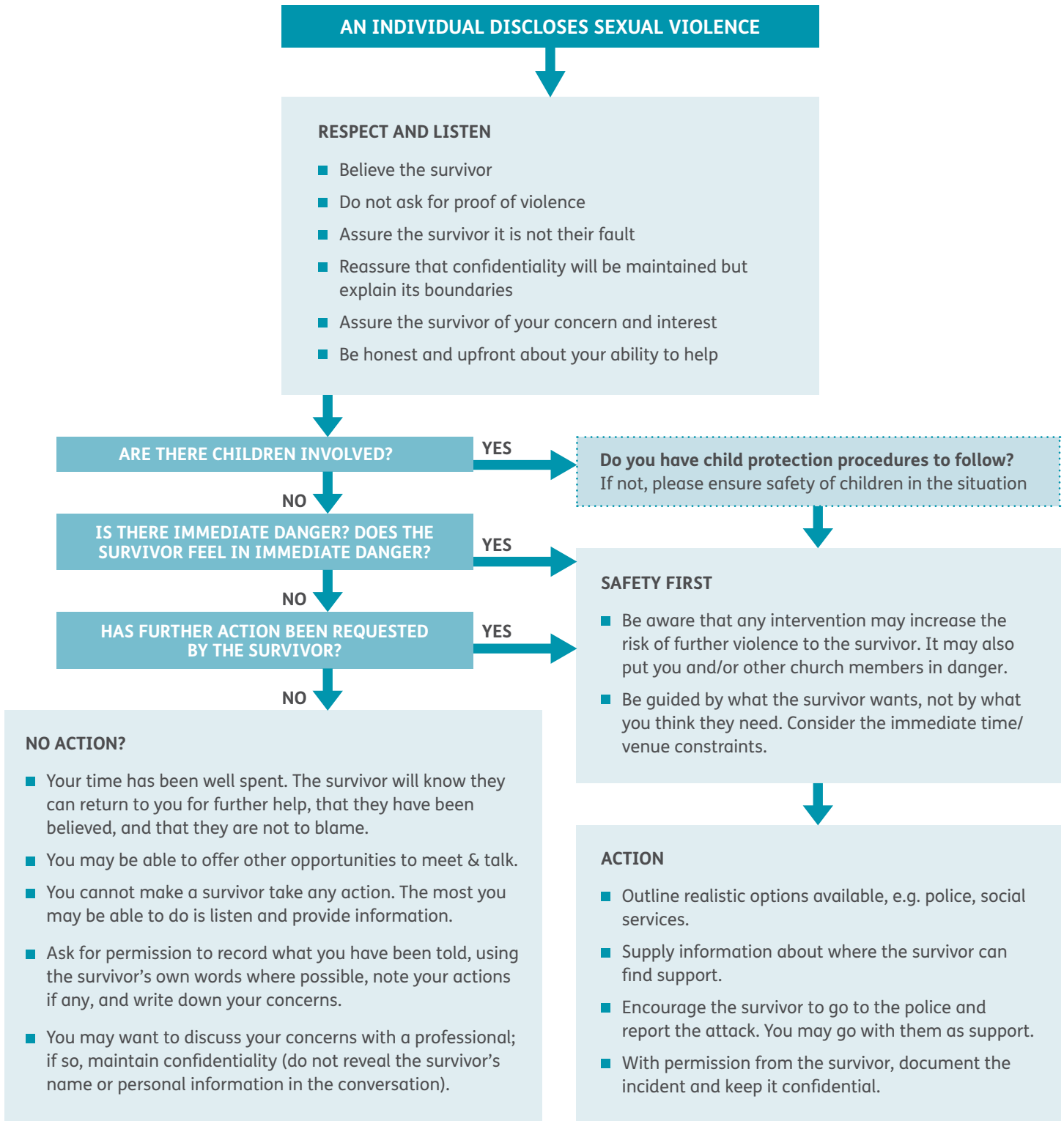
If an individual talks to you about their own experience of sexual violence, here are some simple steps to help you provide them with appropriate care and support and handle the information sensitively:

When someone tells you about a personal experience of sexual violence:

- Stay **calm** and don't panic.
- Provide a comfortable environment for the survivor to talk. If possible, talk to them in an appropriate, **quiet and confidential** place.
- Do not be alone with an individual of the opposite sex. If the survivor is of the opposite sex to you, invite a trusted individual of the same sex as the survivor to be present too, first asking the survivor's permission.
- **Listen** carefully.
- Tell the survivor of sexual violence that, whatever happened, **it is not their fault**.
- Tell the survivor that you **believe** them.
- Write down the survivor's story in their exact words as soon as you are able to. (This will be helpful if they want to report the attack to the police or courts.)
- Do not presume to tell them what they should have done to avoid the attack.
- Be supportive and not **judgemental**. Disclosure can be scary for a survivor.
- You need to ask only four questions:
  - **What** happened?
  - **Who** did this to you?
  - **Where** were you when this happened?
  - **When** did this happen?

# D. SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND THEIR FAMILIES

After an individual has disclosed sexual violence to you, it is recommended you follow the process described below. This has been used with permission of Restored, an international Christian alliance working to transform relationships and end violence against women. This flowchart has been adapted from a church resource pack produced by Restored ([www.restoredrelationships.org](http://www.restoredrelationships.org)).<sup>1</sup>



- Get support – you should not deal with this alone. Contact a member of your church or another facilitator. You should always ensure confidentiality so, when seeking support, you should not give the name of the survivor or any information that could identify them, unless you are speaking to the police.
- Your safety is also very important – make sure you are safe and that you are not putting yourself in a dangerous situation.
- If the survivor is in immediate danger, work with the local authorities or community workers to draw up a plan to ensure the survivor’s safety. For example, this could mean the survivor moving to a safe house.

*Please Note:*

It is the choice of the individual as to whether they want to report the experience of sexual violence. The role of the church is to provide them with care and support, accompanying them to the police and legal services if necessary. At all times, the survivor needs to be listened to.

## E. LISTENING TO SURVIVORS

Survivors of sexual violence often feel that they are not fully heard within the church. It is a challenge for the church to create safe spaces where survivors can receive support and care, as well as healing from the hurt and pain that they have experienced. It is important to note that survivors of sexual violence are members of the community and may even be members of the church congregation.

**‘Living with trauma of rape is an everyday struggle for me. I feel as if all the people see that I have been violated. I relive this painful experience every time I see the man who raped me... I relive the fear and have sleepless nights when I see the place where I was raped... I do not trust my community at all for I screamed very loud for help but no one came to my rescue. When I reported this in my church, I was told to pray. Yes, I do pray but it does not take the inside pain away...’**

The experience of a survivor of sexual violence in South Africa

### COUNSELLING

It is often important for survivors to be able to speak about their experiences and receive special support from a trained professional.

There may be trained professionals within the church who are able to meet with the survivor. Alternatively, find out if there are professional services in your community that you can recommend to individuals when they disclose to you.

Counselling is a process that takes time but in the long term it will allow the survivor to feel heard and begin to heal from the emotional trauma. It is important to ask survivors if there are practical ways that the church can support them, even if they are receiving professional counselling.



## Dos and don'ts when supporting a survivor<sup>2</sup>

When a survivor shares with you their experience of sexual violence, it is important to remember the following guidelines for what to do and what not to do.

### DO:

1. Find a safe place to talk.
2. Have someone else present – if this is acceptable to the survivor.
3. Allow time for the person to talk.
4. Listen to what they have to say – and take it seriously.
5. Believe them: their description of the abuse is only the beginning of the story.
6. Give priority to their immediate safety.
7. Empower them to make their own decisions.
8. Support and respect their choices.
9. Give them information about relevant support services.
10. Use the expertise of those who are properly trained.
11. Reassure them that they are not to blame. They do not deserve this and it is not God's will for them.
12. Let them know that what the perpetrator has done is wrong and completely unacceptable.
13. Love and support them.
14. Be patient.
15. Protect their confidentiality.

### DON'T:

1. Judge the person or what they tell you.
2. Make unrealistic promises.
3. Minimise the severity of their experience or the danger they are in.
4. React with disbelief, disgust or anger at what they tell you.
5. React passively or do nothing.
6. Ask them why they did not act in a certain way.
7. Blame them for the violence.
8. Act on the person's behalf without their consent and/ or knowledge.
9. Expect them to make decisions quickly, especially if the perpetrator is someone they know.
10. Make decisions for them or tell them what to do.
11. Encourage them to forgive the perpetrator.
12. If their husband is the perpetrator, do not send them home with a prayer/ directive to submit to their husband/ bring him to church/ be a better Christian wife.
13. Contact the person at home, unless they have agreed to this.
14. Approach the perpetrator for their side of the story: this will endanger the survivor.
15. Discuss what they have told you with anyone else, without their permission.
16. Encourage their dependence on you or become emotionally or sexually involved with them. This is just another form of abuse.



<sup>2</sup> These guidelines have been adapted and used with permission from Restored's church pack on domestic abuse. For a full copy of this resource, please see page 54 for the link to the Restored website. The church pack also includes a list of Dos and Don'ts when dealing with a perpetrator.

# F. KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS

## AWARENESS OF NATIONAL LAWS AND POLICIES ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE

It is important to be aware of the laws that exist in your country relating to sexual violence. To find out more about these laws, you can speak to your local police or contact the local/national government. The Ministry of Gender or Ministry of Justice are the sector of government responsible for such laws.

## AWARENESS OF INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATION AND POLICIES ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE

There are international policies and legislation on sexual violence, to which some countries have signed up. Below is some information about the main international agreements that exist to date.

### **CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women)**

This is a landmark international agreement that affirms principles of fundamental human rights and equality for women across the world.

It was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly and was implemented from 1981. Of 193 countries, 187 countries have signed this agreement.

### **UN CSW 2013 Resolutions (United Nations Commission on the Status of Women)**

Every year, representatives of United Nations member countries gather to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and create policies.

In 2013, the priority theme was the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.

There were agreed resolutions which recognised the need to strengthen legal systems and policies, address structures and underlying causes of gender-based violence, and improve evidence of what interventions work to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. Of particular importance was the acknowledgement of the significant role that religious leaders can play in the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and in changing attitudes and behaviours.

### **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995**

This was adopted by countries present at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. The declaration requires all governments to develop strategies or national plans of action. These action plans are to have specific activities to improve the situation of women, including addressing violence against them.



# SELF-DISCOVERY TOOL

This tool enables individuals and groups to reflect on and understand their personal attitudes or behaviour while also reflecting on the current situation within their church and community. It serves as a mirror that enables individuals and churches to discover what they know about particular subject areas. It will also help them decide which Bible study might have the most impact on them, individually and as a church, as they seek to prevent and respond to sexual violence. This tool can be used for facilitators themselves and also as a group exercise.

## HOW TO USE THE TOOL

There are ten key areas that the tool helps users to reflect on. Each area has a level of 0 to 3. Read each of the descriptions in the boxes for each topic and circle the response that best describes your current knowledge and attitudes. Write the score associated with that description in the space provided.

*For example: for the topic ‘understanding of sexual violence’, you feel the description ‘I discuss the issue with others’ best describes your knowledge and actions. This is under ‘level 2’, therefore write ‘2’ in the space provided.*

Each section of this tool has a Bible study associated with it (see page numbers in the table below for the relevant study). We recommend that you start with the Bible study related to the ‘key topic’ where you scored lowest. Then, when you have completed that Bible study, return to the tool to evaluate the impact the Bible study has had.

There are no right or wrong answers: it is important to ask people to answer truthfully. The tool can be repeated as often as people want. Using it more than once enables people to reflect on how much they have learnt and what changes have occurred in their church and community.

**After you have completed the tool, you can address these questions for personal reflection or as a group activity:**

- In which ‘key topic’ did you get a low level?
- Reflect on why you may have a low level.
- What change can you make to improve this low level?
- In which areas did you gain a high level?
- Reflect on how you could serve the church and community within these areas of need.

## QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

If you have used this tool as a group activity, split the group into small groups for discussions where they can share their experiences of using the tool.

- In which ‘key topics’ did most people get the lowest level?
- Which area do church members want to focus on first?
- In which key areas did most people get the highest level?
- Discuss some examples of how the church or individuals are responding currently to key areas in which they identified with a high level.

**Following discussions, the group can decide which Bible study they would like to do first.**

### Please Note:

**Justice** is the responsibility of the legal system (police, courts) within the country. However, it is important that the church and community understand the laws of the land and work with the government to strengthen the legal system with regard to tackling sexual violence effectively.

Key topic	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	What level do you identify with?	Related Bible Study
<b>AS AN INDIVIDUAL</b>						
<b>Understanding sexual violence</b>	I do not understand what sexual violence is	I know the basic facts and statistics about sexual violence	I discuss the issue with others	I am able to teach and train others about sexual violence		<b>1</b>
<b>Inclusion of survivors of sexual violence</b>	I do not know any people who have experienced sexual violence	I am aware of survivors of sexual violence but make little attempt to include them in activities	I actively seek to include survivors in activities that I facilitate	Survivors of sexual violence are actively involved in discussions, activities and church responses to sexual violence		<b>2</b>
<b>Gender Equality</b>	This is not an issue: men were created to rule over women, and women to serve men	I think that women need to be equal in some spaces in our lives	I believe that men and women are created equal, in God's image, the image of the Trinity	I'm an advocate for gender: I speak against inequality in any form that leads to sexual violence		<b>4</b>
<b>Human Trafficking</b>	I do not know what human trafficking is	I know the basic facts about human trafficking	I understand how human trafficking is related to sexual violence and I speak about it with others	I am able to teach and train others about the dangers of human trafficking and its impact on sexual and gender-based violence		<b>8</b>
<b>AS A COMMUNITY / CHURCH</b>						
<b>Church Leadership</b>	Church leaders show no interest in responding to sexual violence	Church leaders have some understanding of the issues relating to sexual violence	Church leaders actively discuss sexual violence in their church and community	Church leaders listen to survivors of sexual violence and encourage the church to speak out about sexual violence and respond to the needs of survivors		<b>5</b>
<b>Preaching and prayer on sexual violence</b>	There is no preaching or prayer on sexual violence	Sexual violence is mentioned in church occasionally (from the pulpit and in prayer)	Sermons and Bible studies mention sexual violence on a regular basis	Our small group studies the Bible in relation to what it says about sexual violence		<b>3</b>
<b>Prevention</b>	Our church group does not know what causes sexual violence to happen	Our church group understands that sexual violence happens because of an abuse of power in a relationship	Abusive actions and misuse of scripture are challenged within the church and community	The church promotes loving and respectful relationships in the church and community		<b>6,7</b>
<b>Engaging men and boys</b>	Working with men on boys is irrelevant to ending violence against women (including sexual violence)	I understand there is a need to work with men and boys too, but do not know how	Men and boys must be engaged in all spheres to end violence against women. I make an effort to include them sometimes	Men and boys are included in the conversations on violence against women. We work with men on changing their behaviours, attitudes and practices, and also provide the space for them to become advocates for change		<b>4,9</b>
<b>Care and support (including counselling)</b>	There is no practical counselling or treatment for survivors of sexual violence	There is some knowledge about what treatment and counselling survivors need	The community/church fully recognises the need to support survivors of sexual violence and ask them what support they need	There are established support groups and initiatives to support survivors of sexual violence		<b>10</b>
<b>Justice (see note opposite)</b>	I am not aware of what legislation exists in our country regarding sexual violence	I understand the need to seek justice for survivors and report sexual violence to the police	The church engages with the police and courts to ensure perpetrators are prosecuted	The church works in collaboration with others to ensure that laws are enforced and survivors are able to be heard		<b>11</b>
<b>Economic empowerment for survivors</b>	I do not think survivors require any additional financial support	I understand that survivors may have to leave their home when they report sexual violence and may require support to gain a secure livelihood	The church provides some economic support to survivors if they ask for support. This is a one-off gift	The church works to include survivors in savings and loans groups – seeking to provide holistic support		<b>12</b>

# GLOSSARY

- adult** Any person aged 18 years and older.
- attitude** Opinion, feeling or position about people, events and/or things that is formed as a result of one's beliefs. Attitudes influence behaviour.
- belief** An idea that is accepted as true. It may or may not be supported by facts. Beliefs may stem from or be influenced by religion, education, culture and personal experience.
- blame** When you feel or declare that someone or something is responsible for the sexual violence.
- child** Any person under the age of 18.
- confidentiality** Confidentiality means that information that has been shared must be kept private, and you agree only to share information about a person with their permission. Confidentiality is an ethical principle that is associated with medical and social service professions. All written information is maintained in a confidential place in locked files and only non-identifying information is written down on case files. Maintaining confidentiality means that case details are never discussed with family or friends, or with colleagues whose knowledge of the information is not necessary. The exception to maintaining confidentiality is only in the case of a disclosure of harm to oneself or to others or if children are at risk.
- counselling** The provision of professional assistance and guidance in resolving emotional, personal or psychological problems.
- denial** Refusing to accept something that has happened is true. Survivors of sexual violence may not want to accept that they are being abused, because they are afraid of the consequences.
- disclosure** The process of revealing information. Disclosure in the context of sexual abuse refers specifically to how a non-offending person (for example, a friend or church pastor) learns about an individual's experience of sexual violence. Individuals will disclose sexual violence experiences differently and disclosure is often a process rather than a single or specific event. Disclosure about sexual violence can be directly or indirectly communicated, voluntarily or involuntarily.
- discrimination** To treat someone differently and worse than others because of who they are and what they have experienced. Survivors of sexual violence can be discriminated against (or made to feel unwelcome) within their own families and churches.
- equality** This is about making sure people are treated fairly and given fair chances. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way, but it recognises that their needs are met in different ways. Promoting equality should remove discrimination in the areas of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.
- facilitator** A leader who encourages others to share their knowledge, experience and thinking so that people can learn through sharing together.
- female genital mutilation/cutting** Involving the removal of a girl's external genitals and sometimes sewing of the vaginal opening. This can take place when a girl is still a baby, during childhood, adolescence or at time of marriage.
- forced marriage** A marriage in which one or both of the people are married without his or her consent or against their will. Forced child marriage is where a girl is forced to marry early; it usually means the end of her education if she is in school and the end of her being able to make important decisions about work, her health and her well-being. Abuse is common in child marriages.
- forgiveness** This is letting go of the need for revenge and releasing negative thoughts of bitterness and resentment.

<b>gender</b>	The non-biological differences between men and women; the widely shared ideas and expectations that define women and men in a given society. Such ideas include the differences in dress, behaviour, status and roles. These commonly shared expectations guide the behaviour of women and men (rather than the sexual differences, which are biological).
<b>gender-based violence</b>	This refers to any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will; it is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. Gender-based violence encompasses a wide range of human rights violations, including sexual abuse, rape, domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment, trafficking of women and girls and several harmful traditional practices, including forced early marriage.
<b>harmful traditional practices</b>	These are cultural and religious traditions that are harmful physically or emotionally to the individuals involved.
<b>inclusion</b>	The action of including or of being included within a group or structure.
<b>leadership</b>	The action of leading a group of people, organisation or church, or the ability to do this.
<b>perpetrator</b>	A person who directly inflicts or supports violence or other abuse inflicted on another against his/her will.
<b>rape</b>	Any act of non-consenting sexual intercourse, i.e. forcing a person to have sex against their wishes.
<b>reporting</b>	The action of going to the police and providing a statement and evidence that sexual violence has occurred.
<b>safe space</b>	A place where anyone can relax and be able to express themselves fully, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome or unsafe.
<b>self-stigma</b>	The feeling that we are unworthy and shameful. Survivors of sexual violence may feel unworthy or ashamed and stigmatise themselves. This often means that they will be afraid to report what has happened because of fear of being judged.
<b>sexual exploitation</b>	Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes. This includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
<b>stereotype</b>	Ideas about something or someone that have become fixed through being widely used, but which do not necessarily apply in every case.
<b>stigma</b>	A mark of disgrace or disapproval associated with a particular circumstance, quality or behaviour of a person. A person experiencing stigma from the people around him/her can lead this person to feel socially unacceptable, resulting in isolation, rejection and shame. Stigma manifests itself through the disapproval, condemnation and rejection of survivors of sexual violence.
<b>submission</b>	The action of accepting or yielding to a superior force or to the will or authority of another person.
<b>survivor</b>	A person who has survived/experienced sexual violence. The term 'survivor' can be used interchangeably with the term 'victim'; however, the term 'victim' has more negative associations. Throughout this resource, we use 'survivor'.
<b>trauma</b>	Traumatic experiences usually accompany a serious threat or harm to an individual's life or physical well-being, and/or a serious threat or harm to the life or physical well-being of the individual's child, spouse, relative or close friend. When people experience a disturbance to their basic psychological needs (safety, trust, independence, power, intimacy and esteem), they experience psychological trauma.

## FURTHER READING AND USEFUL RESOURCE MATERIAL

If you have access to the internet and want to learn more about sexual and gender-based violence, you can find further information and resources on these websites:

### **Restored** [www.restoredrelationships.org](http://www.restoredrelationships.org)

This is an international Christian alliance working to end violence against women by transforming relationships between men and women. You can download a pack for churches: [www.restoredrelationships.org/resources/info/51](http://www.restoredrelationships.org/resources/info/51)

### **We Will Speak Out coalition** [www.wewillsspeakout.org](http://www.wewillsspeakout.org)

This is a global coalition of Christian-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs), churches and organisations who have committed themselves to see an end to sexual violence in the world. You can also find resources for churches and factsheets: [www.wewillsspeakout.org/resources](http://www.wewillsspeakout.org/resources)

### **Christians for Biblical Equality** [www.cbeinternational.org](http://www.cbeinternational.org)

CBE is an NGO of Christian men and women who believe that the Bible teaches the fundamental equality of men and women of all ethnic groups, economic classes and age groups.

### **Gender and Development Network** [www.gadnetwork.org.uk](http://www.gadnetwork.org.uk)

GADN is a network of UK-based NGO staff, practitioners, consultants and academics working together on gender, development and women's rights issues. Here you will find information on gender equality and women's rights in international development policy and practice, expert advice and different advocacy campaigns.

### **Bridge** [www.bridge.ids.ac.uk](http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk)

Bridge is a specialised gender and development research and information service based in the Institute of Development Studies in the UK. You will find publications on gender-related research.

### **Hot Peach Pages** [www.hotpeachpages.net](http://www.hotpeachpages.net)

This website provides a list of agencies around the world where women and girls can find support if they are experiencing abuse.

### **Tearfund TILZ** [www.tearfund.org/sexualviolence](http://www.tearfund.org/sexualviolence)

This is the section of Tearfund's International Learning Zone where you will find publications and research on sexual violence from various programmes and countries where Tearfund partners work.

### **Footsteps** [www.tearfund.org/footsteps](http://www.tearfund.org/footsteps)

Footsteps magazine is a Tearfund publication. It shares information, ideas, contacts and experience in a Christian context at grassroots level. It is published three times a year in four languages – English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. This publication can be found online or you can be added to the mailing list to receive it at your postal address in your country.

Of interest to this topic, you could look at the following issues of Footsteps: Issue 98 (HIV), 96 (Human trafficking), 86 (Stigma), 72 (Family life), 68 (Forgiveness and reconciliation), 60 (Facilitation skills), 45 (Advocacy).



**tearfund**

**HAND IN HAND**

Bible studies to transform  
our response to sexual violence

**[tearfund.ca](http://tearfund.ca)**

PO Box 3220 Stn Industrial Park, Markham ON, L3R 6G5 Canada

T (905) 415-8181 E [connect@tearfund.ca](mailto:connect@tearfund.ca) [f](#) [@](#) [/tearfundcanada](#)

Registered Charity No. 10822 2191 RR0001