

# **21 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A CHURCH COMMITTED TO ENDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

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**AFFIRM GOD'S DESIRE FOR OUR  
SPIRITUAL, PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL  
WELLBEING IN TEACHING AND PRACTICE:**

- **1) Domestic abuse and any form of violence is wrong, and is incompatible with the teaching of Jesus.**
- **2) Domestic abuse is a legitimate reason for separation and divorce.**
- **3) Domestic abuse is not a form of spiritual suffering to be endured as coming from God, and survivors should not be required to remain in an abusive relationship.**
- **4) Spiritual and psychological healing is a long road. God cares about traumatic memory and pastoral care should be anchored in longevity.**

# **PRIORITIZE SAFETY:**

- **5) Acknowledge publicly that domestic abuse has happened and is happening in churches.**
- **6) Train leaders, seminary students and ministry teams to recognize and respond to abuse: be connected to local social services and professional resources, know how to refer, when to report abuse, and share information with members.**
- **7) Implement a domestic abuse action plan in churches to ensure best practices on safeguarding, confidentiality and accountability for youth and adults, so that churches are safe spaces for everyone.**
- **8) Be aware of the cycle of violence and the continuous attempts it takes for victims to leave a violent relationship.**
- **9) Identify or develop teachers who can offer formation on healthy relationships with youth and adults (including consent, sexual assault rape; teaching on abuse and divorce in premarital and marriage counseling).**
- **10) Safety should always be prioritized over efforts at reconciliation.**

# CREATE SPACES WHERE EVERYONE CAN FLOURISH :

*“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.” Romans 12:15*

- 11) Foster church life that demonstrates mutually healthy relationships, that women and men are of equal value in the eyes of God, and which elevate the voice, the agency, and the worth of women.
- 12) Foster welcoming church communities which do not discriminate based on relationship status.
- 13) Foster caring and compassionate church communities which do not tolerate the shaming, judging and exclusion of survivors of domestic violence.
- 14) Foster church cultures that do not condone gossiping, and model behaviours that value confidentiality.

# **SUPPORT SURVIVORS IN THEIR HEALING JOURNEY :**

- **15) Listen to and believe survivors of domestic violence when they disclose.**
- **16) Recommend individual counseling, rather than couples counseling, as the recommended intervention in cases of abuse and violence.**
- **17) Build awareness that the post-separation period is when a woman is most at risk of violence.**
- **18) Offer or direct survivors to confidential support groups.**
- **19) Encourage initiatives within church communities of care and provision to survivors and their children.**
- **20) Recognize that healing is a long process and survivors need time, space, compassion and understanding.**
- **21) Recognize that some topics, language or practices used in church can be triggering for some survivors, and learn to respond with sensitivity.**

