

Standing up for justice

Isaiah 58:1-9a

The opening of this chapter of Isaiah begins with a reminder of what is at the heart of true worship and then proclaims a call to stand up for justice and equality.

Jesus, in Matthew's Gospel, echoes this appeal for genuine, righteous ways of living. Coupling these passages together reminds us that Jesus' bid to be salt and light was not new teaching, but a reminder to understand the message of the prophets. This week we explore the ongoing need for us to stand up for justice.

Read this week's passage:



Read

Choose a section from Martin Luther King Jr's 'I have a dream' speech and read it aloud. Do you think God has a dream for the human race?



BAKE

Buy or bake gingerbread people and assorted colours of icing. Ice each part of the body a different colour to represent the diversity of God's people. How much more enjoyable are the biscuits because of the diversity of colours on them?

Research

Find out more about Racial Justice Sunday and thank God for diversity. Pray for those affected by racial injustice.

Find more free Roots resources to reflect on this week's theme:



Living Scripture

'Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice... Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house.' Isaiah 58:6-9

Fasting is the spiritual practice of giving up something (usually food, but it could be television or social media) to focus on prayer and deepening your relationship with God.

In Isaiah's day, people fasted regularly to show their devotion to God, but here God confronts their hypocrisy, saying that during their fasting, they were oppressing the poor. It is a religious show. They gave up food to try to get God's attention and favour, but God responds that his attention is on the poor and the injustice in our nations.

Where do you think God's attention is in our world right now? What hypocrisy might God want to call us out on? Do you think we pay more attention to religious practices and personal growth when God's eyes are on injustice?

As we look towards Lent, instead of giving up biscuits or chocolate, you might consider ways you could focus on campaigning for justice or more ethical living.

First impressions

- What beliefs might motivate Christians to campaign for justice?
- What areas of injustice and oppression would you like to 'shine a light' on?
- How is God prompting you to challenge the status quo and make your voice heard?



Pray

We praise you, life-giving God,
for all those who have bravely stood up for justice,
for those who have brought your healing where there was hatred,
for those who have shone your light of reconciliation into division,
for those who have spoken your words of peace over war,
for those who have gone in your name to places of discrimination.
Thank you for inspiring and empowering them.
May we follow in their footsteps,
in Jesus' name.
Amen.



Make some paper chain people. Each day, write on them a group of people who are disadvantaged or discriminated against and pray for them.