

Questions for Constructive Conversation around Faithful Responses to Racial Injustice

It is recommended that you focus on five of the questions below. The questions in bold are the recommended questions, though if you feel that your congregational context would benefit by discussing some other questions, please use your discretion in leading the conversation. Some questions are borrowed from the UCC Sacred Conversations on Race.

1. In what ways has your racial/ethnic background shaped your current values, habits, practices, ways of worship, and personal priorities?
2. **Do any of these Biblical passages impact the way that you feel or think about racial justice in your community today? If so, how? If not, why not?**
3. **How does your Christian faith affect the way you feel or think about issues of racism and racial justice?**
4. In what ways have you intentionally sought out experiences that helped you learn more about people who are racially different from you? What have you learned about yourself and others in those experiences?
5. In what ways do you experience a disparity between your values/dreams about racial justice and your daily life? What feelings come up for you as you name that disparity? What do you intend to do about that disparity?
6. **What or who has helped you become more aware of how race and racism are at work in your life and your community?**
7. What or who has inspired you to become more involved in efforts to confront and challenge racism in your life and your community?
8. **What do you personally and spiritually have to gain by participating in these conversations as a congregation?**
9. What do you personally and spiritually have to lose if you do not participate in these conversations as a congregation?
10. **What witness are you making as a result of your faith in God?**

Scriptures for Reflection on Justice in God's World

All verses from the NRSV

Hebrew Bible

Jeremiah 7:5-7

For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly act justly one with another, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, then I will dwell with you in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your ancestors for ever and ever.

Jeremiah 8:11

They have treated the wound of my people carelessly,
saying, 'Peace, peace',
when there is no peace.

Isaiah 61:8

For I the Lord love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Amos 5:24

But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Micah 6:8

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

New Testament

Matthew 5:1-11 (Sermon on the Mount)

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

‘Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

‘Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

‘Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Luke 4:18

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has anointed me

to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives

and recovery of sight to the blind,

to let the oppressed go free,

Luke 18:1-8 (Parable of Persistent Widow) – Persistently seeking Justice

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, ‘In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, “Grant me justice against my opponent.” For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, “Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.”’ And the Lord said, ‘Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?’

1 Corinthians 12:26

If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

Hebrews 13:8

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

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