

Prayer Service for an End to Human Trafficking

For use on January 11, 2012 (Human Trafficking Awareness Day)

Opening Song: Select a song, such as “God Whose Purpose is to Kindle” or “We are Called”

Leader: As we reflect on Psalm 137, we re-member all human beings caught in the web of trafficking, alienated from all that is essential and dear to them.

Psalm 137 (Read Antiphonally)

Side One

By the rivers of Babylon
there we sat weeping
when we remembered Zion.

For there our captors asked us
for the words of a song;
Our tormentors for joy:
“Sing for us a song of Zion!”

Side Two

On the poplars in its midst
We hung up our harps

Side Two

But how could we sing
A song of the Lord
In a foreign land?

Side One

All: Glory to you, God of life and freedom, praise and thanksgiving now and forever. Amen.

Leader: Each person forced into slavery has a unique story- a story of struggles, hopes and dreams. Let us listen now to the story of two survivors of human trafficking.

Reader 1: Siblings, Rebecca and Solomon, longed to go to school, but before they turned 10 years old they were taken from their homes in Nigeria’s south-eastern Abia state by their “uncles”- who could be neighbors or friends of their parents.

Reader 2: Rebecca says, “My daddy died and my uncle said he would take me to school in Gabon.” He said that he had brought her brother there, tricking them with a photo of him in school uniform. She complained that no matter how many sachets of drinking water she sold at traffic lights, it wasn’t enough to send her to school. Her uncle’s response was beatings, bondage and malnutrition.

Reader 1: Three years earlier Solomon also kept asking when he could go to school. Threatened with beatings, he stopped asking the question and continued selling leather on the street. If he did not earn the equivalent of \$25 a day he was beaten.

Reader 2: Solomon and later Rebecca, escaped by running to the Nigerian embassy in Libreville. Four years ago the Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation rescued them and they have lived in the Abuja shelter since, finally receiving their long awaited education.

Quiet Reflection/Sharing

- Abuse and power are key to the cycle of human trafficking. What circumstances of abuse or misuse of power am I aware of? How might I speak out or educate myself and my community?

Artwork by African children survivors of human trafficking

Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center 206.223.1138 www.ipjc.orgResponse

Prayer: Rebecca and Solomon just wanted to go to school. Instead, traffickers stripped them of their innocence and basic human rights. In their names we pray...

Leader: For the estimated 27 million women, men and children currently held in slavery-like conditions.

Response: Restore their freedom

Leader: For young girls and women exploited and objectified in the commercial sex industry.

Response: Restore their freedom

Leader: For those forced to become soldiers, especially children who are made into tools for violence.

Response: Restore their freedom

Leader: For those in bonded labor in agricultural fields, mines and factories.

Response: Restore their freedom

Leader: For conversion of heart for the perpetrators and organizers of human trafficking.

Response: We act in support of freedom.

Leader: For governments, corporations, and consumers, that we will address the systems that make human trafficking possible.

Response: We act in support of freedom.

Leader: For the success of efforts to stop the demand for human trafficking.

Response: We act in support of freedom.

Closing Prayer: God of gracious goodness, we ask for the gifts to see goodness in all enslaved people, and the compassion which compels us to act on their behalf. Amen.

Take Action:

- Learn about the local and global reality of human trafficking.
- Pray for an end to human trafficking. Join or start a monthly vigil on the 1st Sunday of the month.
- Demand slave-free products. Buy fair trade when possible.
- Advocate for state and federal legislation that protects victims and prevents human trafficking.

For more education and action resources, visit www.ipjc.org Human Trafficking