

No Place for Violence Here Sermon Guide

Recommended pre-reading

1. The Australian Parliament House library provides a helpful overview of domestic violence at http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/ViolenceAust
2. Lindsay & Justin Holcomb, *Is It My Fault? Hope and Healing for Those Suffering Domestic Violence* (Moody 2014)
3. The online workshop at noplacementforviolence.com

Sermon Outline

The Problem of Domestic Violence

In this section introduce the issue of domestic violence. You could cover the nature of domestic violence as the attempt to control another and elaborate by pointing to the 7 different ways men seek to control wives.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey estimated that in 2012, 49 per cent of men aged 18 years and over and 41 per cent of women aged 18 years and over had experienced some form of violence since the age of 15. Men were far more likely to experience physical violence at the hands of a stranger. However, the majority of women experienced physical violence by someone known to them—usually an intimate partner.

The Way of Jesus

In this section explore the meaning of Jesus's way of living as a model for us. Domestic violence is driven by the desire to control others, to force them to do our will. Yet the way of Jesus was not one of coercion but one of love and invitation. Jesus came to a world where power was used to coerce. The Roman Empire used violence to coerce people to submit to their will (note for example Jesus's comment that the rulers of the Gentiles "lord it over" their people and the mind-numbing brutality of crucifixion); the Pharisees used exclusion and shame to coerce people to conform to their vision of godliness.

Jesus chose neither of these paths. He devoted himself to doing good to others, seeking to build them up, heal their wounds, and urging them to discover the ways of God. He invited people into his disciple community but he never coerced them. As followers of Jesus we are to carry this way of living into our homes and domestic relationships. Violence and coercion represent the way of the world and never the way of Christ.



Taking Action

In this section discuss ways the congregation can respond. Here you might like to highlight the ways you plan to take part in the No Place for Violence Here campaign. You may also like to comment on our responsibility to

1. Repent of our failure to confront violence. The church has a sorry history with respect to violence. We have all too often overlooked violence in our households, excused it, and protected the perpetrators rather than the victims.
2. Seek the healing of our households. There may well be households in our church where violence is occurring. Our responsibility as a faith community is to stand by these households as they seek a healing in which the perpetrators of violence can learn non-violence and victims are protected. This may be a long process and the violations may have been so great that the couple do not have a future together, but either way we need to be a safe place for people.

