



Tip Sheet 1

What does the Bible say about Domestic and Family Violence?

▶ **All Humans deserve to be treated with dignity, respect and love.**

The Bible is very clear about how we should treat one another. In the book of Genesis, God says we are created in His image, with inherent worth and dignity. Therefore, all people should be treated in a way consistent with this dignity (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 27:37-40).

▶ **The Bible never condones domestic or family violence**

Violence by one image bearer against another is condemned in the Bible. As such, domestic violence is sinful. Any attempt to use the Bible to condone abuse of any kind is a distortion of Scripture (e.g. Galatians 5:19-26, 2 Timothy 3:2-3). On the contrary, the Bible encourages us to serve one another in love.

▶ **What does the Bible say about submission?**

Perpetrators may use the Bible, especially Ephesians 5:22-23 out of context to condone controlling behaviour. These verses read:

"Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church."

The word submission here does not mean that a wife need be a "door mat" and do whatever her husband says. Rather, as the passage shows us, it is not for husbands to force their wives to submit.

"Submission is to be voluntary, not forced. Never. It is not the husband's job to make his wife submit. The Bible opposes all coercion or manipulation and any attempts to restrict a woman's freedom to move or speak." Sandy Grant

Marital submission – when Biblically understood – is not oppressive, but part of God's good order for marriage. Conversely, husbands should treat their wives with a sacrificial love that rejects control and violence.

▶ **God is opposed to violence in marriage and in the family.**

The Bible warns husbands to be considerate with their wives, and to treat them lovingly. Healthy relationships are characterised by sacrificial love, as shown to us by Jesus Christ. Husbands and wives are both encouraged not to look to their own needs, but to those of each other. This includes respect, consideration and mutual love (e.g. Mark 10:42-45, Ephesians 5:21-33, Hebrews 13:4).

"But whoever should be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the son of man came not to be served but to serve." Mark 10: 43-45



If you are concerned that you are a victim of Domestic and Family Violence please contact the CPU (Conduct Protocol Unit) and inform the Breaking the Silence representative or leadership of your church.

▶ **Conduct Protocol Unit, Presbyterian Church of NSW**

Jon Flood

Phone: **02 9690 9324**

Email: jflood@pcnsw.org.au

www.breakingthesilence.org.au

▶ **NSW Domestic Violence Line**

Phone: **1800 656 463**

24/7 support and referrals for victims.

www.domesticviolence.nsw.gov.au/get-help

▶ **No to Violence: Men's referral service**

Phone: **1300 766 491**

Information, referral and support for male perpetrators, male victims and for their relative and friends.

www.ntv.org.au

▶ **Child protection Helpline**

Phone: **132 111**

▶ **Further resources**

Presbyterian Church NSW, Conduct Protocol Unit, *Breaking the Silence Training Workbook* from <https://www.jerichoroad.org.au/breaking-the-silence/basic-training>

State Library of NSW, *Hot Topics: Domestic Violence*, Issue 87,2013, Legal Information Access Centre, Online: <https://legalanswers.sl.nsw.gov.au/hot-topics-domestic-violence>

Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney, Professional Standards Unit, *Provisional Sydney Anglican Policy on Responding to Domestic Abuse*. October 10,2017, Online: <https://safeministry.org.au/domestic-family-abuse>

Smith, C. *God's Good Design: What the Bible really says about Men and Women*. Matthias Media. 2012.

Holcomb, J.S. Holcomb, L.A. *Is it my fault? Hope and healing for those suffering domestic violence*. Moody Publishers. 2014.