



Tip Sheet 10

How to Make Churches Safer

► **Making churches safer starts with good theology**

In our churches we must preach excellent theology around issues of family and domestic violence (see also Tip Sheet 1).

We must:

- Teach this theology from the pulpit to our congregations - but also to our elders, small group and kids church leaders;
- Affirm and demonstrate in leadership positions, that the relationship of loving, sacrificial husband and the intelligent, voluntary submission of a wife is the Biblical pattern of marriage;
- Reject the use of this Biblical pattern to justify any form of domestic family abuse;
- Let it be known that domestic or family abuse of any kind will not be tolerated;
- Express appropriate concern and action for children, women and men who are victims of abuse (see Tip Sheet 8);
- Protect victims;
- Call on husbands and wives to use their God -given responsibilities for the good of their families.¹

► **Educate/train: provide psychoeducational material to congregations**

- Train ministers and elders in the prevention of and dealing with domestic and family violence - see Jericho Road's website <https://jerichoroad.org.au/breaking-the-silence/basic-training/upcoming-bts-training-dates> for information on future courses - or ask Jericho Road to come to your church to provide training
- Print the tip sheets from this series and make them available to congregations
- Post relevant tip sheets on walls in bathrooms or in other prominent places where people are likely to read them
- Make sure your church runs frequent Breaking The Silence training
- Make sure your congregation knows who the Breaking The Silence Representative is in your congregation; what their role is and how to best contact them. This should be communicated via church communication processes (bulletins/emails/pulpit)

► **Be a church where relationships and community are fostered**

Domestic and family violence thrives in the dark. It flourishes in places where women and children are isolated, and where secrets can remain hidden. It prospers where people aren't well known and where what we say in public is not what happens at home. Building church communities where it's difficult to isolate women and families can often play a preventative role. Thus, as a church we should live our lives not in isolation from one another, but with one another.

¹ S.Grant. On Domestic Violence. The Briefing, 3 March 2015. Matthias Media.
Online: <http://matthiasmedia.com/briefing/2015/03/on-domestic-violence/>



As 1 Corinthians 12:25-26 exhorts;

So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.

As far as it is possible;

- Be in one another's homes - as often as possible. Run Bible studies from homes or drop in on brothers and sisters as a matter of normal culture and routine within your church
- Speak with one another in Bible Studies about family, marriage and parenting
- Develop a culture within your church where sharing life and its problems is normal and expected
- Value women and children in many and varying ways within your church's life
- Be a church that models what a godly man looks like – loving and sacrificial, putting others before themselves, cultivate men who take responsibility for their wrongs and who do not exhibit controlling behaviours
- Notice if a brother or sister stops attending church or church groups - pastorally follow up

► For further information:

Breaking the Silence training workbook from
<https://jerichoroad.org.au/breaking-the-silence/basic-training/>

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NSW Domestic Violence Line

Phone: **1800 656 463**

24/7 support and referrals for victims.

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

Child protection Helpline

Phone: **132 111**

Literature

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