



GENDER INEQUALITY AND INEQUITY

Meeting Segment Guide

Produced by the Policy and Advocacy Team
as part of the *Social Justice Stocktake*



Today we will be taking some time to look at the issues of gender inequality and inequity, and spending some time in prayer for our society.

The following resources have been created to assist you to run a 5-8 minute segment in your Corps' or mission expression Meeting, Team Meeting, ALT Meeting or any space where you gather with other people.

These resources are ready to print and use in your Meeting. Below you'll find:



TALKING POINTS



A PRAYER TIME GUIDE
(INCLUDING THREE WRITTEN PRAYERS)



EXTENDED SEGMENT OPTIONS



LINKS TO FURTHER RESOURCES

For further support in connecting with issues in your local community, contact us at policy.advocacy@salvationarmy.org.au



Talking Points



INTRODUCTION

Today we will be taking some time to look at the issues of gender inequality and inequity, and spending some time in prayer for our society.

GENDER INEQUALITY AND INEQUITY

- » **Gender inequality** is a social condition that stems from the unequal value placed on men and women. Although women make up over half the population in Australia, they are underrepresented in almost all places of influence. Across all positions, women are paid less than men and they are also disproportionately more likely to be doing unpaid work at home.
- » **In recent decades**, women in Australia have made significant strides towards equality with men. In various workplaces and social settings, a growing number of women have taken on leadership roles, forging pathways for other women and girls. However, despite this progress, the impacts of gender inequality continue to very much be a reality for half of the Australian population.
 - Australian women retire on average with over 40 per cent less superannuation than men.¹
 - Australia's full-time gender pay gap is 13.4 per cent, with women earning an average \$242.20 per week less than men.²
 - In 2019 the Workplace Gender Equality Agency reported that only around 17.1 per cent of CEOs or heads of business were women.³
 - At home, the 'typical' Australian man spends fewer than five hours a week doing housework, but the typical Australian woman does between five and 14 hours.⁴

Unfortunately, the gap is widening in Australia. The World Economic Forum annual global gender gap index indicates that Australia's overall pay gap has worsened from 23rd position in 2010 to 50th in 2021.⁵

- » **Gender inequality also provides** the underlying conditions for violence against women, which is just one of the reasons that we, as a society, need gender equality urgently.
- » **When gender equality exists**, a number of things take place. Gender equality prevents violence against women and girls. It's essential for economic prosperity. Societies that value women and men as equal are safer and healthier. Gender equality and women's economic security has the potential to benefit boys and men through increased personal wellbeing.ⁱ
- » **While we as humans do not have the power to eliminate pain**, hurt and death from this world, we as God's people on earth we have been given the mandate to show this world a snapshot of the Kingdom to come. As Michael Frost puts it, "The purpose of our lives is to be like a trailer of an upcoming feature" (see Video option below). In the same way that a movie trailer gives a glimpse of what the film in its entirety will be like, we are to give a glimpse of what the world to come will be like. Our lives are to show a glimpse of God's Kingdom. In doing so, we are to ease the pain and hurt and to comfort in death in preparation for the coming of that Kingdom.
- » **Gender Equity, or recognising women and men equally**, is important to us in The Salvation Army, as it is a biblical concept. We believe that all people – both male and female – are made in the image of God and are equal in value. The Bible teaches the fundamental equality of all people, and that there is nothing that separates us into a higher or lower level. As Paul wrote in the book of Galatians:
 - "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

1. Women in Super. (n.d.). The facts about women and super. Women in Super. <https://www.womeninsuper.com.au/content/the-facts-about-women-and-super/gjumzs>

2. Workplace Gender Equality Agency. (2021, February). Australia's Gender Pay Gap Statistics (Factsheet). https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Gender_pay_gap_fact_sheet_Feb2020.pdf

3. World Economic Forum. (2021, March). Global Gender Gap Report. https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf

4. Ruppner, L. (2017). Women still disadvantaged by the amount of unpaid housework they do, census data shows. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-11/women-doing-lions-share-of-housework-2016-census-release/8434340>

5. Workplace Gender Equality Agency. (2020, June) More women at the top proves better for business. <https://www.wgea.gov.au/newsroom/more-women-at-the-top-proves-better-for-business>

i. Hudson, V. et al. (2014). Sex & World Politics. Columbia University Press Schleman, S., Ruppner, L. & Milkie, M.A. (2018) Who Helps with Homework? Parenting Inequality and Relationship Quality Among Employed Mothers and Fathers. *J Fam Econ*, (39), 49–65. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-017-9545-4> McKinsey Global Institute. (2015). The Power of Parity: How advancing women's equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth. https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/industries/public%20and%20social%20sector/our%20insights/how%20advancing%20women%20equality%20can%20add%20%20trillion%20to%20global%20growth/mg%20power%20of%20parity_full%20report_september%202015.pdf



Talking Points



- » **Throughout Scripture we see powerful examples of God working through people** – both men and women. We see examples of faithful women who followed their God, despite the fact that the world did not always see or value them in the same way that God does.
- » **The Salvation Army has understood the value of women**, and particularly the value of women and men working together, since its very beginnings. Right from the start, our Founders saw women as having equality within the leadership and ministry of the Church, which resulted in women being some of the most influential people of the early days of the Army. Catherine Booth, co-founder of The Salvation

Army, was a strong advocate of equality between men and women. It has been said that “Catherine Booth ... opened the door into female ministry for ... Salvationists of the coming generations. She gave them the right to preach, to break the Bread of Life to hungry souls, and to be servants of all for Christ’s sake.”ⁱⁱ

- » **It is always good for us, as an Army**, and as a Corps/ALT/Team, to recognise the important role that women play and how we all – men and women – work together to bring God’s Kingdom to Earth. We celebrate this together, collectively, and thank God for the contributions of all women.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY

If you are using this resource specifically for International Women’s Day (8 March), you may like to use the below additional talking points.

Today is International Women’s Day – a day which is observed globally to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. We all know great women who have had a significant impact on our lives in some way, and today we get to celebrate them. Right around Australia, and around the world today, people are gathered in Salvation Army Corps, recognising International Women’s Day, and celebrating women in their midst.

International Women’s Day is important because, throughout history, the world has not always recognised the incredible contribution that so many women make to society. On the flip side, the world has often recognised the contribution that men have made to society, sometimes to the exclusion of women. International Women’s Day is one attempt to rectify that – to acknowledge that, in order for society to thrive, both men and women who contribute to society should be recognised for who they are and what they bring to the world.

We are working towards a society that recognises the reality that God loves and ministers through all people, equally. International Women’s Day gives us the opportunity to affirm our belief in these things, and to celebrate the way God is working in people’s lives.

This is not about NOT recognising men and their contribution; it’s about trying to rectify some of the imbalance that has been present for many years. It’s about recognising that women play a vital part in seeing the world thrive, and that we are best when we work together.

ii. Larsson, F. (1974). My Best Men are Women. Salvation Army Publishing



Talking Points



WHERE TO FROM HERE?

- » **The Salvation Army continues to recognise** that women have a unique, important contribution to make to the Church and the world, yet like the rest of the world, we recognise that we can always do better. Through the work of its Gender Equity Committee, The Salvation Army is in an exciting time of reclaiming and reimagining what gender equality looks like in The Salvation Army today.
- » **There is much that can be done to achieve gender equity and equality.** As a nation we can actively implement policies that promote women's independence and decision-making both in public and private. State and territory governments can set an example by ensuring equitable paid leave and superannuation arrangements for public sector workers are in place so that informal care and pregnancy don't lead to long term disadvantage.
- » **Community groups play an important role in ensuring gender equality is achieved.** Aside from the fact that they can call out sexism, they can also look to their own leadership and decision-making structures and ensure that women have an equal place at the table.
- » **As individuals, we can challenge our own unconscious bias** that allows for gender inequality to be present in our own lives. All individuals, irrespective of gender, need to call out sexism – both overt and covert. We can challenge language and images that suggest that women are less than men. We can also challenge constructions of masculinity that suggest men are aggressive or dominant and constructions of femininity that suggest women are passive or subordinate.
- » **It is vital that all of society works together** to achieve the world that God desires – a world in which women and men are valued equally and given opportunities to contribute all they can to that society.



Prayer Time



Play one of the following songs, and ask people to spend some time in silent, individual prayer while the song plays. Ask them to pray for society – that we would become better at recognising and empowering women.

[Amazing Grace \(My Chains Are Gone\)](#)

– Chris Tomlin

[Cornerstone](#) –Reuben Morgan

The Salvation Army Songbook No. 944 – What Can I Say to Cheer a World of Sorrow ([lyrics](#))

The Salvation Army Songbook No. 938 – We Have Caught the Vision Splendid ([lyrics](#))

Following this time of individual prayer, you may like to have three different people lead the group in the below prayers. These prayers are printed on separate pages for ease of distribution to your readers.





Prayer Time



Prayer for our community

Lord,

We come together as a Corps today and thank you for the incredible women we have in our midst. We thank you for each one of them – for their gifts, their passions, their experiences, their hearts – for who they are. We thank you for all that they contribute to our own lives, for all that they contribute to our Corps, and for all that they contribute to our community. We thank you for the strong women in our community.

We thank you that you have made every person different, and as a Corps family today we celebrate those differences. We ask that you would help us to recognise each and every person as a person made in your image; a person who you have good plans for; a person who you love.

We pray this in your name,

Amen.



Prayer Time



Prayer for Australia

Creator God,

As we take time today to reflect on the impact of individuals, and in particular women, we can't help but recognise the significant role that women have played in the building of our country, and the role that they continue to play in making Australia the nation that it is.

We recognise the unique and vital role in society that women of every nation and culture play – from the influence of our Indigenous sisters and aunties, to those who are arriving on our shores today. We thank you that we can learn lessons from each other. Help us to be willing to learn.

We pray that you would help us as a country to continually do better in recognising individuals for the role they play in our Australian society.

In your name we pray,

Amen.



Prayer Time



Prayer for the world

Loving God,

Today we give thanks for each other. We recognise that there are countries in which women are still openly oppressed, vilified and discriminated against. We know that this is not what you want for them, so we bring those women before you now, and ask that you would intervene. We pray for societies that do not recognise the value and importance of women. Lord, have your way, we pray.

Help us to work together as a global community to make this world more like you want it to be. Help us, as citizens of the world, to do our part in seeing each and every person reach their full potential.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.



For an extended segment



If you would like to present an extended segment (that goes for longer than 10 minutes), here are some ideas that may take people deeper:

- » For a Bible story group or for wider sermon use and prep, you can use the following study [here](#) on four women in the Bible.
- » Introduce your congregation to some significant women in the life of The Salvation Army. You can find information on such women in this [study](#).
- » Invite significant women from your community to come to your Sunday morning Meeting, and recognise their contribution to the community.
- » Share information about how your Corps/mission expression/ALT is assisting society to better understand Gender Equity and Equality.
- » Share this video about the 'Doughnut Girls' – significant women in The Salvation Army's History. - [The Salvation Army Doughnut Girls - YouTube](#)

USEFUL SONGS:

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[God Of This City – Chris Tomlin](#)
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[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 944 – What Can I Say to Cheer a World of Sorrow \(lyrics\)](#)
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[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 1003 – O Lord, Whose Human Hands Were Quick \(lyrics\)](#)
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[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 938 – We Have Caught The Vision Splendid \(lyrics\)](#)
.....

[For The One – Bethel Music](#)
.....

[The Salvation Army Songbook Hallelujah Chorus 43 – Just One \(lyrics\)](#)
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For kids:

Acknowledging that many groups, and in particular congregations, have people of all age groups, you may like to engage the children in your congregation while this segment is on. One idea is to have them make, or decorate, thank you cards for women who lead and serve in their community.



Further Resources



For more information on this issue, and for further resources:

[The Salvation Army Australia's Gender Equity Committee](#)

['Women of Justice' Bible Study](#)

[International Women's Day](#)

[The Salvation Army International Women's Ministries](#)

[The Salvation Army International Positional Statement - Sexism](#)

'Hidden Treasure: Valuing Women in The Salvation Army' by Leanne Ruthven, available in hard copy at Salvationist Supplies, or e-book online

'Theory and Practice of Gender Equality in The Salvation Army' by Janet Munn, available on Amazon

[Gender Equity Resources from The Salvation Army New Zealand](#)

['Where are the Women? Women as History Makers' by Colonel Janet Munn](#)

If you'd like any further information on this resource please contact the Policy and Advocacy Team at policy.advocacy@salvationarmy.org.au

Every person can make a difference.

Together, we can make an even greater difference.



