



SOCIAL JUSTICE

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 what it means to 'work for justice' – both within our communities, and in our day to day lives.

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

The Salvation Army in Australia has a four-fold Mission: We share the love of Jesus by Caring for people, Creating faith pathways, Building healthy communities and Working for justice. Today we will be taking some time to look at what it means to 'work for justice' – both within our communities, and in our day to day lives.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

- » **The idea of 'social justice'** is one that has become increasingly popular in recent decades. However, it is not a new concept. The term 'social justice' first emerged during the Industrial Revolution in the early 19th century. At that time, the concept of social justice was an attempt by many to make the world look more like they believed it should. Fast forward to today and the term is used to describe the way people work against inequality in many different parts of everyday life, including the environment, race, gender and much more.
- » **Social Justice is a difficult thing to define** as the term evokes a variety of responses which differ from person to person. However, each of us can recognise that something in this world is just not right – it's just not the way it's meant to be. You'd be hard pressed to find someone who doesn't want the world to become a better place. Working for social justice is working to see the world become a better place – a place where all people, not just some, thrive and have the opportunity to be all that they can be; a place where we connect to the environment, to the people around us, and to God, in a healthy way.
- » **When we look at the life of Jesus**, we find a person whose sole purpose was to show us more of what the world should look like. In reflecting on his example as portrayed in the Bible, we can find practical guidance on how we should treat others. Throughout his life, Jesus consistently included the excluded, challenged harmful cultural practices, confronted the powerful when needed and advocated for the oppressed – all values which today are recognised as 'social justice'. Jesus' lifestyle – his choices every day – modelled a life of social justice. Today, as his disciples, we must follow his example in our own context. Similarly, the way we live our lives – the choices we make every day – say a lot about what we value and what we want this world to look like. Social Justice is often a series of seemingly small choices, made every day, which work together to make this world better for all – choices which see God's Kingdom come on earth.
- » **When we pray The Lord's Prayer**, we ask "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven". We are calling for God's Kingdom on earth to look like God's Kingdom in Heaven. God's Kingdom is God's ideal plan for the world. Therefore, those elements on earth which would not be present in his ideal plan – those social ills and problems which make us uncomfortable when viewed in the light of holiness – are not part of a world based on God's justice. The Scriptures are full of descriptions of this incredible Kingdom which we are going to experience, yet we rarely take the time to think about this kingdom for which we are praying, and what it would actually look like on earth. It's vital that if we are working towards the Kingdom of God on earth, we take the time to explore what that Kingdom looks like.
- » **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.



Talking Points



» **Sometimes, in our working** to make this world look more like God intended, we must actively work to eliminate some of the issues that cause harm to people and God's creation. We work towards social justice through our everyday choices, and at times, we have the opportunity to alter some of the systems which cause these issues to exist. It is for this reason that we actively work to rectify 'issues' of social justice – things such as discrimination, family and domestic violence, climate change, alcohol and drug misuse, social isolation and loneliness and more. We use the power that we have – both in our small, everyday choices, and in our intentional, proactive efforts – to make the world look more like the Kingdom of God.

If you are using this resource as part of the Social Justice Stocktake suite of resources, you may like to include the below information in your Segment.

The Salvation Army has recently undertaken the 'Social Justice Stocktake' – a project which took an in-depth look at every electorate in Australia, and the issues that concern the people who live in them. By having explored which issues are present in each area, we are better placed to be able to respond to those issues, and to work to see them rectified. By doing this, The Salvation Army is actively and strategically working to see God's Kingdom come in every electorate. Over the coming weeks, we will be exploring the issues that are present in our area, and asking God how we should respond to them.

» **Living a life that brings about Social Justice** – that is, in a way that brings about the Kingdom of God – is not an optional extra to being a Christian. As Christians, Social Justice is the outworking of our faith in the most practical of ways. It is the natural expression of our holiness. In Isaiah 6, we read

the story of Isaiah's sanctification and anointing. In verse 7, Isaiah is sanctified – made holy – when an angel touches his lips with live coal. Immediately following, in verse 8, Isaiah hears the voice of the Lord saying "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?". Isaiah responds: "Here am I. Send me!". As soon as Isaiah has been sanctified, God sends him out to mission. Isaiah is not made holy in order to sit around and simply be holy. He is made holy and as a result, is sent out into the world. In the same way, when we are sanctified and our lives are transformed by Christ, this transformation naturally brings about a desire to see others' lives transformed and sanctified. We are sent out to mission.

» **As followers of God**, our ultimate aim is to emulate Him. He instructs us to "be holy as He is holy". We see through the Scriptures, time and time again, that when God instructs us to "be holy as He is holy", the command is followed by a list of ways in which to care for and advocate on behalf of others (for example, in Leviticus 19). The Scriptures also show us that not only is justice something that God appreciates, it is the very "foundation" of who He is (Psalm 89:14). Justice is the physical and visible embodiment of God's holiness. Therefore, the physical embodiment of our holiness must be justice also.

» **By following Jesus' example** – by looking at his mission and the way he lived – we can begin to understand what God's Kingdom on earth may look like. By making choices about the way we live, and by intentionally engaging in advocacy and action to rectify issues of social injustice, we can see our community changed into one that honours God and sees his justice proclaimed.

» **As we pursue holiness**, not only as individuals but as a unified Army, let us never forget that Social Justice is not simply a "good idea" or a "fad", nor is it appended to the Christian faith, or an optional extra. It is the very embodiment of God's holiness, and



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of His kingdom on earth. It should permeate every interaction, every conversation, every prayer. It is at the very heart of being a follower of God.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The Salvation Army works towards Social Justice in everything it does on a daily basis. We work to see God's Kingdom come locally through all of our services which aim to help people experience fullness of life. Additionally, through our Policy & Advocacy Team, The Salvation Army strategically advocates for social change on a whole range of issues, including many which are evident in our own community.

- » **As individuals**, there are so many campaigns that we can support, and so many social issues to tackle. Through these, we can work to make the world right in front of us look more like God intended it to. As former world No. 1 tennis player Arthur Ashe once said: "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can."
- » **We can have a significant impact** on the world through the way we live in the day-to-day — through the way we connect to the earth we stand on and the way we connect to those around us. Let's start living every day, in the big choices and the small ones, in a way that makes the world better for all.



Video

You may like to play '[Michael Frost – The Purpose of the Church](#)' Video to help people understand their role in seeing God's Kingdom come on earth.



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 your community, and for the issues that concern them within it.

[Soldier's Hymn](#) – Phil Laeger & Marty Mikles

[Let Justice Roll](#) – Nathan Rowe

[God of Justice](#) – Tim Hughes

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

[The Salvation Army Songbook No. 944 – What can I say to cheer a world of sorrow?](#) ([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 on separate pages so that you can easily print and distribute them to participants.





Prayer Time



Prayer for our community

God of all and in all,

As we sit here today in this place, we pause to think of the community around us.

As we walk around our neighbourhood we see the beauty of your creation but we also see pain, challenges, and many ways in which we are not living out the Kingdom of God.

Help us have eyes to see these injustices, hearts to want to change them, and hands and feet willing to sacrifice and do the work. Bring us out of our comfort zones, and the four comfortable walls we sit within today, and be you in our community we pray.

Amen.



Prayer Time



Prayer for Australia

Our Loving Creator,

We thank you for the gift of living on this land now known as Australia. We rejoice in its amazing diversity and beauty.

As we pause in this way, we are also mindful that things are not always as they should be, that our country bears the scars of generations of greed, corruption, violence and injustice. It continues to echo through our communities with tears of despair and grief and loss.

When we think of Australia, we long for your kingdom to come and for your will to be done here: for people, communities, cities, land and seas to be brought to wholeness.

In your name we pray,

Amen.



Prayer Time



Prayer for the world

Holy Spirit,

We pray today the uncomfortable prayer that you may change us.

We humbly pray that you would give us eyes to see the injustices of this world how you see them;

Give us hearts to truly feel the pain that these inequalities bring;

Give us strength to step outside of our comfort zones;

Give us creativity to find answers;

Give us passion to believe our small changes can make a difference

And give us endurance to see them through.

Loving God, give us the unshakable desire to see that the world around us is not as it should be, and yet you have called us to be you representatives within it.

May we use all that you have given us to see your Kingdom come, as it is in heaven, and may we start today.

Amen.



For an extended segment



If you would like to present an extended segment (that goes for longer than 10 minutes), or include related elements in another part of your meeting, here are some ideas that may take people deeper:

USEFUL SONGS:

[Soldier's Hymn](#) – Phil Laeger & Marty Mikles

[Let Justice Roll](#) – Nathan Rowe

[Hosanna](#) – Brooke Fraser

[God of Justice](#) – Tim Hughes

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

The Salvation Army Songbook No. 944 – What can I say to cheer a world of sorrow? ([lyrics](#))

The Salvation Army Songbook No. 1003 – Whose Human Hands Were Quick ([lyrics](#))

The Salvation Army Hallelujah Chorus No. 43 – Just One ([lyrics](#))

[The World for God](#) – Phil Laeger, Marty Mikles and Evangeline Booth

[Go Light Your World](#) – Chris Rice

[Isaiah 65:17-25](#) provides a description of “a new heaven and a new earth” (v. 17). This description can be helpful in helping people understand what The Kingdom of God may look like in reality.



Further Resources



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

The Salvation Army Australia's [‘A Pathway to Social Justice’ Report](#)

[The Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission](#)

[‘How Kids can do Social Justice’](#) by The Salvation Army's Policy & Advocacy Team

[‘Social Justice Basics’ Resources](#) by The Salvation Army's Policy & Advocacy Team

[‘Jesus & Justice’](#) by The Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission

[‘Justice Themed Song List’](#) by The Salvation Army's Policy & Advocacy Team

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

Every person can make a difference.

Together, we can make an even greater difference.



