

RISE UP Service Outline Template

*This service outline may be used and adapted for a variety of contexts. You could ask your local church to use this as a basis of their service during 16 Days (or another time) or just use the **RISE UP** pledge and final prayer. You could use this to hold your own diocesan or branch service.*

Please add hymns and other prayers as wished and adapt it using some of the resources here: <https://www.mothersunion.org/riseup>

As people arrive give them a square piece of paper to make an origami dove before the service begins.

Welcome and call to worship

Welcome to our service which is part of Mothers' Union's **RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse** campaign to raise awareness about domestic abuse.

The letters of RISE UP stand for **R**espond, **I**nform, **S**upport, **E**mpower, **U**nite and **P**ray.

As we raise our voices on behalf of the voiceless, we also raise our voices in worship and intercession to our loving righteous God.

I love the Lord because he hears my voice
and my prayer for mercy.

Because he bends down to listen,
I will pray as long as I have breath!

Psalms 116:1-2 (NLT)

Respond

We pray for God's compassion as we seek to **RESPOND** appropriately to those who may disclose domestic abuse, we draw near in faith to the Lord who draws near to us with love and hears our prayers for mercy:

Lord, give us eyes to see and ears to hear the many different ways in which domestic and family violence is carried out against all sorts of people, in all sorts of ways, in our communities. Thank you that you see and you hear everything that happens in this world. Give us understanding and keep us vigilant to recognise those who need assistance, knowing that violence does not always involve physical scarring and bruising. Give counsellors and pastoral care workers understanding and wisdom as they offer support in these painful circumstances.

Amen.

https://www.commongrace.org.au/domestic_violence_pray

Opening hymn

Opening prayers and confession

Loving Lord,
who came to proclaim justice,
make us bold to speak out truth
and break the power of silence.

Loving Lord,
who came to minister mercy
make us agents of compassion
to release the oppressed from fear.

**Merciful and loving God,
forgive us when we have closed our eyes to
the sufferings of others;
when we have stayed silent
in the face of abuse and oppression;
when we have declined to challenge
unacceptable actions and attitudes.**

**Take away our selfishness
and fill us with new resolve to
proclaim justice and mercy in the name of Christ.
Amen**

Inform

We pray for God's wisdom as we become better **INFORMED**

Readings

Jesus stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

'The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

Luke 4:16-19

A Woman's Psalm

O God, I am a woman in a violent world
let me know your peace.

Let blind rage born of despair
not find its target in me.

Let the value of my life
not be reduced to the jewellery I wear.

Let my family life not end
that life in a gang may begin.

Let rape not violate my body
nor anger ravage my soul.

Let fear not enter my heart
but caution sharpen my mind.

Let the light of Christ so shine in me
that I may reflect your love.

Let the joy that the apostles knew
infuse my spirit and alleviate my pain.

Let Love who suffered and died on the cross
find resurrection and new life in the world you love.

O God, I am a woman in a violent world
let me know your peace.

Elizabeth Kaeton, (from Lifting Women's Voices: Canterbury Press; 2009)

Hymn Homily

Share this message from Dr Hannah Thompson, Church of England National Safeguarding Learning and Development Manager:

'Domestic abuse is the most prevalent form of abuse within our society, and the church plays an important part in recognising and responding to this complex social problem that impacts people, communities and services across our society, spanning health, housing, social care, the Criminal Justice System and beyond.'

'Church should be a source of support for people experiencing abuse, but it all too often creates barriers and difficulties.'

'A recent study undertaken in partnership with Mothers' Union and the national safeguarding team highlighted we still have some way to go to ensure anyone experiencing domestic abuse feels safe and supported by their church community. As in some cases "domestic abuse is not considered a subject to be talked about in the Church to which I belong"'

'As Church we want our communities to feel able to recognise and refer individuals to services that can provide the specialist support.'

Then encourage those present to reflect on how they might personally **RISE UP** and support their branch or church to achieve the Bronze award:

1. Put a RISE UP poster raising awareness about domestic abuse in an appropriate public place such as in churches, toilets, community centres, village halls etc.
2. Commit to pray for those affected by domestic abuse, including the victims, survivors, perpetrators, and those who work in the field of domestic abuse.
3. Make a connection with your local domestic abuse support organisation to see how you can support them. You could offer moving in and moving on packages.

Support

We pray for God's gentleness as we try to **SUPPORT** those who have experience of abuse, those whose loved ones have experience of abuse.

Intercessions

Loving Lord,
hear our cries for justice
and break the chains of abuse
that all may live in safety.

Loving Lord,
hear our cries for righteousness
and break the chains of oppression
that all may live in freedom

We take a moment in the quiet to bring our own prayers to God.

Loving Lord,
hear our cries for mercy
and break the chains of fear
that all may live in peace. **Amen**

Empower

*Ask those present to write their personal pledge to **RISE UP** on their origami dove. These could be collected and brought to the front, ready to be displayed somewhere after the service.*

The **RISE UP** pledge is a call to action, an invitation, a voluntary choice and opportunity to affirm our commitment to end domestic violence.

Taking the pledge says that our Mothers' Union branch/church will help end domestic violence by pledging to support the Mothers' Union **RISE UP** Challenge by committing to pray regularly, for victims of domestic abuse throughout the whole world.

We _____,
pledge to pray for victims of domestic abuse in the United Kingdom and throughout the world.

Final Hymn

Unite

We pray for the mark of the Holy Spirit to **UNITE** us together to RISE UP

Blessing

May God give us eyes
to recognise abuse where it exists.
May God give us a heart
to reach out in compassion.
May God give us courage and resolve
to make a difference wherever we are.

And the Blessing of God Almighty,
the Holy Trinity,
guide our steps today,
this week and always.

Go in peace and in resolve.

Amen

Source unknown

Pray

We **PRAY** unceasingly, until situations change and freedom, life and love is restored to all.

God of justice, peace and compassion, Heavenly Father, Creator and sustainer of all,

We thank you that you gave yourself, your own Son, to give every person the opportunity to turn from darkness to the light of your presence and love.

We know that all those who endure cruelty and abuse are precious in your sight, that no tear falls without your knowledge and love, and we ask that they would know your presence, strength, comfort and wisdom – even in their fear, confusion and pain.

We commit ourselves, those who have experience of abuse, those whose loved ones have experience of abuse and those of us who enjoy safety and peace in our relationships – to RISE UP against domestic abuse in all its forms.

We pray -

for your compassion as we seek to **RESPOND –**

for your wisdom as we become better **INFORMED –**

for your gentleness as we try to **SUPPORT** –

for your strength as we hope to **EMPOWER** –

and the mark of your Holy Spirit that **UNITES** us together to work and **PRAY** unceasingly, until situations change and freedom, life and love is restored to all.

In your dear and powerful name we cry out to you together. Amen.