



Church and Society
Commission

Taking the Knee: Prayers for Racial Justice and Equality

*A resource provided by the Church and Society Commission
of the Church of Ireland, approved by the House of Bishops for local use.*

We affirm that racism is an affront to God and contrary to the Christian faith. It denies that the reconciling work of Jesus Christ was achieved for all people and that it breaks down the walls of division across all human distinctions. Racism denies our common humanity in creation and our belief that all are made in God's image. It asserts falsely that we find our fundamental identity in terms of race rather than in Jesus Christ.

"Taking the knee" has become a symbol of protest against racial injustice and an expression of solidarity. It has been used by sports personalities, community leaders, and political representatives amongst others. Like all symbols it can easily be misunderstood. However, as Christians we are familiar with the symbolism of taking the knee. In Psalm 95:6, we read, 'we kneel before the Lord our maker'. Taking the knee has special meaning for us as we regularly take to our knees in prayer in intercession, in lamentation, and in helplessness to Almighty God.

We invite you to 'take the knee' both as a sign of our devotion to God's indiscriminate love as shown in the Gospel of his Son, and as a protest against racism as a distortion of God's will in creation and redemption. We invite you to use the following prayers as part of a Sunday service.

Sentence of Scripture

O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! Psalm 95: 6

[Kneel or sit in Silence]

Prayer of Acknowledgement and Lament

Good and gracious God, you invite us to recognize and reverence your divine image and likeness in our neighbour. Enable us to see the reality of racism and free us to challenge and uproot it from our society, our world and ourselves.

We acknowledge and lament the conscious and unconscious racism encountered by many black, Asian and minority ethnic communities in our churches and society.

Give us the courage to stand unequivocally for justice, and for truth. Help us to dismantle racist agendas and to transform unjust structures. Help us to love you with all our heart, soul, and minds. Help us to love one another as you commanded us to do. Help us to treat each other as we would have others treat us. Help us together to find lasting solutions to end injustice and inequality in our world. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, **Amen.**



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Prayers for Racial Justice and Equality

Lord Jesus Christ who reached across the ethnic boundaries between Samaritan, Roman and Jew who offered fresh sight to the blind and freedom to captives, help us to break down the barriers in our community, enable us to see the reality of racism and bigotry, and free us to challenge and uproot it from ourselves, our society and our world.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

God of all peoples, we pray for all victims of racial hatred and discrimination. We pray for your protection especially for those affected in our churches, our schools, our places of work and in our communities and in our land.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all in our world, of whatever race, who suffer the horrors of modern slavery. Your Son came to bring good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed. We thank you for all who are working to combat modern slavery: for governments and agencies, for Church and other faith leaders, for charities and individuals. May we too be voices against oppression, channels of the transforming power of the gospel. May our eyes be opened wide to all who suffer in our midst but out of sight. May we all work for a world where human beings are valued, free to come and go, where no one is enslaved, no one used against their will for another's pleasure or need.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

We pray that we may be able to feel the power of reconciliation. Wherever there is division between us and others, because of our race or ethnicity we pray that we may all be led to reconciliation. We pray for all who work to bring communities together in ways that are just and equal for all.

As we pray for reconciliation, we pray also for restoration. We pray for those whose spirits and communities have been weighed down by racism. Guide us as we strive to ensure everyone has equal dignity.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**