

Domestic violence and Christian Living

What is it?

“Domestic violence is a pattern of controlling and abusive behaviour used by an intimate partner during a relationship or after a separation” (domestic violence handbook for clergy and church workers 2010).

Family and domestic violence includes the following types of abusive behaviours:

- physical and sexual violence or abuse;
- emotional and psychological abuse;
- verbal abuse and intimidation;
- economic abuse;
- social deprivation and controlling behaviours;
- damage of personal property; and
- abuse of power.

+ spiritual abuse

Who is included

- intimate partner relationships;
- other family and co-habitation relationships;
- carer relationships;
- cultural and kinship relationships;
- foster care relationships; and
- blood relatives who do not co-habit, such as elder abuse. (ABS website)

Is it a problem?

2022 = 9,526 family and domestic-related assaults

... on average a woman is killed by her intimate partner every week in Aust

... lots of other abuses that happen in the domestic situation.

Is domestic violence a problem in the church?

... we are not perfect and still battle sin.

... we want to be a refuge for people who live in this broken world

... our own battle with sin as followers of Jesus.

Col 3, we are to be people who put our sinful natures to death.

Phil 1:27, conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel.

What the bible says.

Colossians 3:12 (page 1792) ... cloth ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience.

... bear with each other and forgive each other.

Binding us together is to be love.

Peace should rule in our hearts

... husbands love your wife and do not be harsh with them,

... do not embitter your children.

Philippians 2:3 (p1785)

... “do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit rather in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but to the interests of others”

1 Cor 13 (p 1746), “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 Love never fails.”

... a dangerous topic here... “is this how a victim must love his or her abuser”

“Are Christians who experience abuse expected to endure it as an act of godliness?”

“God hates divorce” Malachi 2:16

... the problem is the abuse or the abuser that reflected a clear refusal to obey marriage promises in the first place.

Jeremiah 3:8, God handed Israel her certificate of divorce

How do we respond as a church?

1) Critic ourselves

Are our words and actions safe to those around us?

2) Understand our brokenness but never excuse abuse

3) A safe haven

What part are you playing in providing a safe haven for people in our church family?