

Ten Ways

TO DO JUSTICE



Seeking justice is a spiritual discipline—a tangible way for us to express our faith by obeying the commands to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Christians have been advocating for systemic change in local, national, and international governments for centuries. Here are some tips for North Americans interested in following Christ in seeking justice today.

1. BE READY TO SACRIFICE

The gift of the Spirit is both a privilege and a responsibility. Following Jesus means surrendering to God's purposes and not our own, which requires sacrifice. It was true for Abraham, Noah, Hannah, Esther, Mary, and Paul. Why should it be any different for us? Surrender and sacrifice can be scary and difficult, but the love of the God we serve is so much greater (Rom. 12:1).

2. SEEK RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE STRUGGLING

One of the greatest gifts that we can give to one another is to know each other. If we seek to help without knowing the people who are being helped, we are bound to impose ideas that may do more harm than good. Being in relationship with people is how we testify to the fact that the God who unites us is stronger than the barriers that divide us (John 17:22-23).

3. LISTEN

Enter into the stories of others. Listen for what's behind the pain that people are experiencing, and identify systemic injustices that are contributing to their suffering. Seek to hear what others are saying, to understand why it matters, and to reflect the love of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18).

- Church Between Borders is a three-part workshop that allows participants to learn about what immigration to the U.S. entails, to step into the shoes of an immigrant hoping to live in the United States permanently, look back at the history of the U.S. immigration system, and reflect on what the Bible says about immigrants. Contact thrive@crcna.org for more information.

- Hearts Exchanged is a learning and action journey designed to equip Reformed Christians to go beyond the headlines into deep work that wrestles with how our churches can become places of belonging and embrace God's call to reconciliation with Indigenous neighbours. Learn more and express your interest at crcna.org/hearts-exchanged.

4. LEAN INTO THE MESS

Too often we shy away from tension, but that is not what we see Jesus doing in the gospels. Jesus embraced people in all their brokenness. He didn't require them to have everything figured out beforehand. If we find ourselves uncomfortable at times, we are probably in the right place (Dan. 6:16).

5. SEEK THE WELL-BEING OF OTHERS

Christians are called to reject self-centeredness and apathy. If we follow Jesus' model, then we are called to radical kindness and generosity. The gospel is about abundance, not scarcity. The message that we are called to preach—both by our words and our deeds—is the sufficiency of the salvation that we find in Jesus Christ. This means that we will seek to remove the barriers to people's understanding and accepting that message by advocating for justice (Matt. 25:40).

6. DON'T BE AFRAID TO BECOME AN ADVOCATE

We cannot draw boundaries around God or where God calls us to work. In fact we have a responsibility to engage as citizens and churches in our communities, nation, and world. As Reformed Christians, we can embrace the opportunities that God offers us to impact the laws of our nation (Rom. 13:6-7). To learn more about how to be faithful and engaged citizens, check out Biblical Advocacy 101; versions for both the U.S. and Canada are available at justice.crcna.org/action-center. Sign up for action alerts and advocacy opportunities from the Thrive newsletter at crcna.org/thrive.

7. LEVERAGE YOUR POWER

Use social media. Write letters. Meet with your representatives. As your awareness and understanding of issues increase, seek to raise the awareness of others through the practice of faithful relational advocacy (1 Pet. 3:15).

8. WORK WITH OTHERS

We are at our best when we are working together in community. Not only does this allow us to build stronger relationships with others, but it challenges and stretches us in meaningful ways that allow us to grow. Working together is also a more sustainable way to do the hard work of advocacy for change (Prov. 27:17).

- Find out more about different churches and groups in learning cohort communities as they explore specific aspects of ministry together, including justice work at <https://www.crcna.org/essentials/thriving-practices>.

9. REPENT AND LAMENT, THEN HONOR AND CELEBRATE HOW GOD IS AT WORK

The troubles of the world can be overwhelming. Through prayer we have the opportunity to surrender our guilt, our pain, and the pain of others into the very capable hands of God. Through the gifts God has given us, we have the opportunity (perhaps even the responsibility) to give God glory through the arts. Whether through poetry or painting, sculpture or song, we are called to name where we see God at work (Ps. 27:6).

10. BE WILLING TO STEP ASIDE

Those who are suffering should be at the center of our advocacy. It's not about us garnering attention but about ensuring that the needs of others are being met. We need to constantly be renewing ourselves in order to continue doing this work (Phil. 2:3-4).

This resource has been developed by Thrive. If you have questions or would like support in ministry, please email thrive@crcna.org.

