



**DAILY SCRIPTURE & PRAYER RESOURCE for the
WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY
12 MAY – 19 MAY 2013**

DAY 7—SATURDAY 18 MAY

“Walking in solidarity”

Scripture Readings

Numbers 27.1-11	The right of inheritance to daughters
Psalms 15	Who shall abide in God’s sanctuary?
Acts 2.43-47	The disciples held all things in common
Luke 10.25-37	The Good Samaritan

“Walking in solidarity”

To walk humbly with God means walking in solidarity with all who struggle for justice and peace. Walking in solidarity has implications not just for individual believers, but for the very nature and mission of the whole Christian community. The Church is called and empowered to share the suffering of all by advocacy and care for the poor, the needy and the marginalised. Such is implicit in our prayer for Christian unity this week.

Commentary:

To walk humbly with God means walking in solidarity with all who struggle for justice and peace. This poses a question for those who pray for the unity of Christians this week: what is the unity we seek? The Faith and Order Commission, which includes the members of the fellowship of the World Council of Churches as well as the Catholic Church, understands unity as: “Visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship.” The ecumenical movement is dedicated to overcoming the historic and current barriers that divide Christians, but it does so with a vision of visible unity that links the nature and mission of the Church in the service of the unity of humankind, and the overcoming of all that harms the dignity of human beings and keeps us apart. As Faith and Order has said:

The Church is called and empowered to share the suffering of all by advocacy and care for the poor, the needy and the marginalised. This entails critically analysing and exposing unjust structures, and working for their transformation ... This faithful witness may involve Christians themselves in suffering for the sake of the Gospel. The Church is called to heal and reconcile broken human relationships, and to be God’s instrument in the reconciliation of human division and hatred (Nature and Mission of the Church).

There are many examples of such acts of healing and reconciliation by the Indian churches. Dalit Christians remind us of other kinds of injustice and the ways in which they are overcome. Until very recently, Christian inheritance laws in India disempowered daughters. The churches supported the demand for a repeal of this archaic law. The story of the daughters of Zelophehad, in which Moses turned to God for justice in support of the rights of the daughters, was invoked to demand justice for women. Thus, Dalit Christians have been moved in their struggles for justice by such biblical witness. They have engaged with Dalits of other faiths and with secular networks and social movements in India and all over the world in their resistance to injustice. Dalits have been inspired in their struggle for justice by the examples of other movements for social reform.

A biblical image of the church united in solidarity with the oppressed is Jesus’s parable of the Good Samaritan. Like the Dalits, the Good Samaritan is from a despised and outcast community. But he is the one in the story who cares for the man abandoned by the wayside, and who proclaims by his solidarity in action, the hope and comfort of the Gospel. The walk towards Christian unity is inseparable from walking humbly with God in solidarity with any and all in need of justice and kindness.

Questions for reflection/discussion

1. Think (and share if you are able) of a time when you have had to stand in solidarity with someone in need, suffering injustice or exclusion. What was that like? Has someone stood with you in such a time? Has there been a time when you felt you failed to stand with someone in such a time? Where is God in all of this?
2. Who in your local community stands in need of the solidarity of the Christian community?
3. What churches are, or have been, in solidarity with you? In what need/issue?
4. In what ways would more visible Christian unity enhance the Church’s solidarity with those who stand in need of justice and kindness in your context?

Prayer for the Day

Triune God, in your very being you offer us a unique pattern of interdependence, loving relationships and solidarity. Enable us to live our lives in this way. Teach us to share the hope that we find in people who struggle for life all over the world. May their endurance inspire us to overcome our own divisions, to live in holy accord with one another, and to walk together in solidarity. God of life, lead us to justice and peace. Amen.



**National Council of
Churches in Australia**
Faith and Unity Commission