

Tips on the Spirituality of Social Justice

1. God wants us to pursue justice, because justice is at the very heart of who God is.
2. Both Biblical Hebrew and Greek use the same word for justice as for righteousness, showing that God's justice consists of right relationship: not only between us and God, but between us and other human beings and between humanity and the non-human creation.
3. We cannot claim to delight in and worship God while ignoring and perpetuating oppression and injustice. Such empty worship is displeasing to God. Pursuing justice, however, is associated with spiritual renewal and refreshment. (Isaiah 58, Amos 5)
4. "Let our hearts be broken by the things that break the heart of God." (Bob Pierce, founder of World Vision). Poverty, hunger, homelessness, racism, exploitation, environmental degradation – all these things degrade and destroy the creatures of God, denying the image of God in every human being and desecrating the world God has made.
5. Jesus identifies himself with the oppressed and those in need (Matthew 25) and his work with God's mission of good news to the poor (Luke 4). Through Jesus, God is reconciling the world to Himself; and we, as the church, are invited into this work. (2 Corinthians 5)
6. "The Church lives in the midst of history as a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the reign of God." – Leslie Newbigin. We are to be a sign of God's presence, a means through which God acts in the world, and a glimpse of what God's kingdom might look like.
7. Just as spiritual renewal requires a commitment to justice, a commitment to justice requires deepening our spiritual lives to sustain us through this demanding and difficult work, and to keep us Christlike in our pursuit of justice.
8. Prayer helps us to find our identity in God; keeps us humble and compassionate; helps protect us in difficulty, and offers a place to go with our fears, anger, and lament.
9. Gratitude helps us to be attentive to what God is doing, recognizes our dependence on God and others, and fosters generosity. Participation in the Eucharist is a physical practice of gratitude that reminds us that we are all one body and that we live by God's grace.
10. Action – even simple things like cooking and serving meals, visiting the sick and lonely, tending a garden, picking up litter, speaking up at a public meeting, putting together relief or harm reduction kits – gets us out of our heads and screens and into the world God loves, among those he loves, in a tangible way.

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