



World Day of Prayer Guiding Principles

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World Day of Prayer is a worldwide movement of Christian women of many traditions who gather in local communities for a common day of ecumenical prayer on the first Friday of March. In our partnership, we are guided by these principles:

1. **Starting point: Christian Women**
 - a. We recognize Christian women as competent to express their faith and to speak about their lives in prayer and worship before God and in community.
 - b. Christian women see themselves and one another as Christians before God coming from different theological and church traditions in which they respect one another.
 - c. They turn to their faith in Jesus Christ and to the bible as a common basis from which to shape their prayer and worship.

2. **Listening and speaking**
 - a. Prayer is rooted in listening to God and to one another. On World Day of Prayer we listen to the Word of God and to voices of women sharing their hopes and fears, their joys and sorrows, their opportunities and needs.
 - b. In a climate of attentive listening, women find their voices and can speak from their experiences. We can “hear one another into speaking”¹.
 - c. The commitment to speak and to listen provides the basis for genuine dialogue.
 - d. Dialogue in WDP takes place between women far apart from one another and among women at home. The voice of far away women is primarily received in written form and asks us for creative ways for how we can enter into dialogue with them. Careful preparation of the WDP service is necessary to enable local communities to join their voices in informed prayer on the first Friday of March.

3. **Being faithful and creative**
 - a. WDP calls women to be faithful to the worship service that they receive and to the women who wrote it.
 - b. Within the demands of translation into different languages and interpretations into different contexts women strive to be faithful to the texts that they received and so to make heard the voices of women of a different country.
 - c. Faithful listening also opens our eyes and leads to creativity in building a bridge between different contexts.
 - d. WDP encourages creative celebration of the WDP service which expresses your own response to the theme, the bible texts, and the points of connection between women in different parts of the world.
 - e. Faithful creativity in celebrating WDP widens the horizons of all who participate. It fosters vital ecumenical prayer and strengthens ecumenical solidarity at the local level and worldwide.

¹ Morton, Nelle, “The Journey Is Home”, Boston, Beacon Press 1985

4. **Stretching beyond what is familiar; becoming inclusive**
 - a. It takes some risk to understand one another from where the other person is rather than from where I am;
 - b. Stretching asks us to move through our own resistance and to overcome obstacles and to cross borders.
 - c. It brings renewal when there is stretching out to far away women and to those who live nearby and to new generations of young women.
 - d. To be inclusive offers the possibility to encounter the breadth and depth of the Christian experience.

5. **Sharing acknowledges that all have something to give and to receive**
 - a. Each year the women of a country share their faith and lives in the worship service with their sisters around the world.
 - b. Taking turns in writing the service emphasizes that all are able to give and receive.
 - c. In sharing prayers, culture, music, art, we discover commonalities and differences that can be celebrated and can be enriching.
 - d. Sharing resources has many expressions: gifts, talents, skills, hospitality, care, time, commitment, reliability, persistence, and other forms of assistance.
 - e. Through the WDP offering women share their resources with women and children around the world.

6. **Developing global ecumenical sisterhood; building trust with one another**
 - a. We begin on a personal level with respect and being open-hearted.
 - b. This openness helps to establish relationships which make further steps possible.
 - c. In an atmosphere of trust barriers that divide can be overcome.
 - d. God's trust in us enables and encourages us to trust one another.
 - e. Trust is also a key attitude in building authentic ecumenical relations.

7. **Being a Christian neighbor in a multi-religious world**
 - a. Our prayer on WDP is Christian prayer taking place in a multi-religious world.
 - b. Called by Jesus Christ to love our neighbors, Christian women seek to live in community with everyone around them including people of other faith traditions.
 - c. While today the search for ways to hold inter-faith prayer is happening on various levels, WDP is keeping its focus on strengthening ecumenical relationships through Christian prayer.
 - d. If people of other faiths wish to attend WDP services or women wish to invite neighbors of other faiths, they are welcome as guests to whom we extend Christian hospitality.

8. **Committed to learn; striving for wisdom**
 - a. Each year WDP brings to women a stimulus to learn and to study. Women welcome the occasion to reflect on the significance of the annual WDP theme and to learn about the lives of people in other countries. They are keen to discover

new understandings about cultures, expressions of Christianity, causes for social problems, urgent world issues, ways to address them, etc.

- b. WDP furthers an attitude of learning that is open to new perspectives and that helps to grow a body of knowledge that can build on the years before.
- c. WDP fosters the use and development of appropriate educational materials that range from written texts to new media.
- d. WDP understands learning as a mutual process of learning together and from one another. Together we strive for wisdom that shapes our understandings and guides our actions in our daily lives.
- e. WDP helps us to recognize better what is our own and to appreciate and respect what is other than our own. To differentiate is an important part of our learning process. Thus we build a global perspective that resembles a rainbow of many colors and that is different from forces that drive “globalization” in a way that devalues people’s lives and cultures.
- f. Each year the WDP theme and worship service take up a different aspect of Christian theology in an ecumenical endeavor. Thus WDP contributes to ecumenical learning and a fuller understanding of our Christian faith.

9. **Moving into responsible action**

- a. In WDP every woman is invited to be engaged and to bring in her talents. All the time, skills, services that are contributed; all the study undertaken and all the trust that is being built become the basis for ongoing action. This active participation takes up the WDP motto: informed prayer--prayerful action. We need the depth of prayer and meditation so we can freely risk ourselves in love and action.
- b. WDP encourages responsible action that grows out of the worship service and its theme, and that is wisely discerned and appropriate for women who engage in it.
- c. The steps toward action begin wherever women are in their everyday lives in their communities and can reach as far as the everyday lives of women in other countries.
- d. When women move forward step by step they express both courage and hope. Being willing to look at the problems that affect the world and cause suffering requires courage. To take small steps and proceed one step at a time is an expression of hope even when confronted by many difficulties.
- e. WDP has grown from small seeds into a global ecumenical movement, a tree that grows every year. The trust that we have is in God who gives the seeds the strength to grow and the tree to bear fruit. God empowers us on our journey as we walk step by step with one another.

Prayer to Guide Us:

God, source of our strength,
we thank you.
You transform the seed into fruit.
You feed and sustain us.
You are with us on easy and difficult paths.
You enable us to walk with one another.

We ask you,
help us to trust your strength that cares for what is small
and that can create something marvelous from timid
beginnings.
Be near us, guide and move us.
As the grains from many fields become bread,
so make out of us one community
sign of hope in this world. Amen.