



Five Ways to Take Mercy to Heart

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

Isaiah 58:9-10

Consider committing to **one or more** of these merciful practices:

1. **Make Mercy Personal** — *Forgiving is the hardest form of giving.*

Give yourself the gift of personal time (*a morning, an evening, or a day*) for quiet reflection. Pay particular attention to the harder edges of your life: situations or relationships that ache for reconciliation. Pray for the strength to find forgiveness where it is needed, and take the next step: send a note, make a call, set up a visit...

2. **Take Mercy to Family Life** — *...the measure you give is the measure you get back.* -Luke 6:37-38

When your family is gathered around the table, open a discussion about the corporal works of mercy (*feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, bury the dead*). Invite people to share how mercy is already part of their lives. Commit to at least one merciful action together and set a date.

3. **Share Mercy in the Faith Community** — *Be mindful of your mercy, O God...* -Psalm 25:6

Invite the leadership of your faith community to host a service of prayer and reconciliation. Include prayers acknowledging the realities and forces that keep us apart. Consider inviting congregations and communities from diverse traditions. Include the sharing of prayers and offering a sign of peace.

4. **Bring Mercy to the Public Square** — *...forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*
Matthew 6:12

Prayerfully consider the most critical events of our time (*violations against Creation and crimes against humanity, terrorism, realities of human migration, refugees, and trafficking, economic inequality, racism, and consumerism...*) Reflect on the impact of any one of these in your local community. Connect with an advocacy or organizing group which promotes compassionate responses.

5. **Shape a Merciful Soul** — *You heal the brokenhearted, and bind up their wounds.* -Psalm 147:3

Consider adopting the ancient practice of keeping vigil. Designate an evening of the week and set aside a period of time to sit in silence, holding open a space for the wounds and worries of our world. Light a candle, and in the darkness let your heart become a conduit for God's abundant mercy.