

Prayer for African-American History Month

God, Creator of Difference and Diversity,

We give you thanks for the rich and varied cultures of the African-American communities in the United States. We are grateful for the contributions of these cultures and for the many gifts African-American individuals, movements, and organizations have made to society, giving us a deeper appreciation of soulful strength, creativity, and work for the common good.

We especially thank you for the deep spirituality of the African-American community, which we continue to hear in prayers and spirituals hymns that inspire us to walk the long road to justice.



God of Freedom,

We mourn the long centuries of slavery that denied millions of your children their basic human dignity. We mourn the chains, the beatings, the humiliations, the sexual violence, the separations of husband and wife, parent and child; we mourn the buying and selling of human beings. We also mourn the indignities of segregation after the abolishment of slavery, the violent attacks and lynchings, separate and unequal schools and hospitals, and the legal and economic injustices suffered by so many in our African-American communities during the last century. And we mourn the senseless deaths resulting from police brutality.

God of Justice,

We see we have come a long way and that we still have a long way to go to ensure your justice for all. We acknowledge that 11 million African-Americans in the U.S. live below the poverty level.¹ We see the inequalities in education for African-American youth in our present educational systems. We realize there are more than a million black men in our prisons and far more African-Americans go to prison than to college because of discrimination in the criminal justice system.² We recognize that less than half of African-Americans own their own homes, that unjust systems exist in the mortgage industry and that unfair housing policies do not serve all Americans. We know from recent studies that inequities throughout the health care system for African-Americans continue to exist.

God of Hope,

We commit to praying, learning, reflecting, and acting in your name so that all systems and structures that promote any kind of racism or discrimination will be revealed and transformed. We celebrate your all-embracing love as we celebrate African-American History Month and the gifts of diversity. Be with us all on our long journey to justice. Amen.

Sources:

1. 45 Million Americans Still Stuck Below Poverty Line: <http://huff.to/1r3IHvg>
2. Incarceration rate for African-Americans now six times the national average: <http://bit.ly/1m8U55Y>