

**Joint Diaconate and Session Meeting**  
**May 24, 2015**

**Opening Unison Prayer:**

**Everlasting God, in whom we live and move and have our being: You have made us for yourself, so that our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you. Give us purity of heart and strength of purpose, that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing your will, no weakness keep us from doing it; that in your light we may see clearly, and in your service find perfect freedom.**

**We pray for your holy catholic church. Fill it with all truth in all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for we offer our prayer in the strong name of Jesus Christ your Son and our Savior. Amen.**

**Scripture Readings:**

**Genesis 19:1-8 – Sodom and Gomorrah**

**Context:**

Two angels (male) come to Sodom, and Lot, Abraham's nephew, makes them his guests. Later the men of Sodom want to have sex with the guests, but Lot strongly resists this and offers them his two virgin daughters instead. The two angels strike the men of Sodom blind and rescued Lot, his wife, and his daughters before the Lord rained down destruction upon Sodom.

The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. **2** "My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning." "No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square."

**3** But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate.

**4** Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. **5** They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them."

**6** Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him **7** and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing. **8** Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof."

### **Judges 19:22-26 - Gibeah**

#### **Context:**

A Levite from Ephraim went to Bethlehem to bring back his concubine who had become angry with him and had run away. On his way back home with this woman he spent the night in Gibeah, where an old man took him as a guest. That night the men of the town wanted to have sex with the male guest, but the host opposed this and offered them the guest's concubine and his own virgin daughter. The concubine was sent out and was repeatedly raped until she died the next morning.

**22** While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, "Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him."

**23** The owner of the house went outside and said to them, "No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this outrageous thing.

**24** Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But as for this man, don't do such an outrageous thing."

**25** But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go. **26** At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, fell down at the door and lay there until daylight.

#### **Break up into small groups of 4 (2 elders and 2 deacons)**

#### **In your small group:**

1. In the Genesis text, what do you think Lot means when he says "Don't do this wicked thing."? Is this an issue of hospitality, or is it an issue of sexual immorality, or both? Explain.

2. The Judges text is very similar to the Genesis text. The man says, "don't be so vile." What is the vile act? Do you find it problematic that in both accounts the men offer women to appease the men? Why do you think they do this?
3. It's very clear that neither of these scriptures have anything to do with same-sex marriage, but they both deal with same-sex intercourse. Do you think these texts are merely about promiscuity or do they also offer any insight on any prohibition of homosexual practice?
4. Leviticus 18:22 says, "*You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination*" and Leviticus 20:13 says, "*If a man lies with a male as with a woman both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them.*" Having just read these texts, do you look at the Genesis and Judges texts any differently? Why or why not?
5. Close your group time in prayer together.