


Disability Justice in the Church:

A Second Hour Elective based on
the book

“My Body is Not a Prayer Request”

By Dr. Amy Kenny



The slide features a light blue background with decorative white leaf patterns in the corners. The top-left and bottom-right corners contain clusters of several pointed leaves on a stem. The bottom-left and top-right corners contain a single large, heart-shaped leaf with internal vein patterns, and a small stem with two leaves below it.

Why Learn about Disability Justice?

Why learn?

SOME FACTS*:

- Disabled people make up about 25% of the U.S. Population (p.6).
- According to a 2018 poll, 67% of people feel “uncomfortable” talking to a disabled person (p.6).
- In 2021, disabled people do not have minimum wage, voting access, or marriage equality in the U.S. (p. 32).
- The “Americans with Disabilities Act” (ADA) was signed into law in 1990, but religious communities are exempt from this law, in part due to Christian leaders lobbying for restrictions (p.28).

**references found on indicated pages of Kenny book.*

Before we begin:

REMEMBER!

- We come to this space with differing backgrounds and experiences.
- Humility, curiosity, and respect are important as we engage with and learn from one another.
- It's OK to ask questions!
- We'll attempt to elevate the voices of those who live with disability as much as possible.
- Each person's perspective is their own and is both valid and unique. The disability community is not monolithic.
- God is with us.



Introduction

This morning, we'll be listening to some portions of the book, learning some concepts, and engaging in discussion with table and/or virtual groups.

Questions are always welcome!

Listening:

Pages 1-4,
"My Body is Not a Prayer
Request"

Dr. Amy Kenny



Learning:

able·ism

/ˈābəˌlɪzəm/ noun

A system of assigning value to people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, productivity, desirability, intelligence, excellence, and fitness. These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in eugenics, anti-Blackness, misogyny, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism.

This systemic oppression leads to people and society determining people's value based on their culture, age, language, appearance, religion, birth or living place, "health/wellness", and/or their ability to satisfactorily re/produce, "excel" and "behave."

You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism.

working definition by @TalilaLewis, updated January 2022, developed in community with disabled Black/negatively racialized folk, especially @NotThreeFifths. Read more: bit.ly/ableism2022

Learning:

eugenics

/yü-'je-niks / Noun

the practice or advocacy of controlled selective breeding of human populations (as by sterilization) to improve the populations' genetic composition

In 1883 Francis Galton, in England, coined the term "*eugenics*" to encompass the idea of modification of natural selection through selective breeding for the improvement of humankind ...—Jeremiah A. Barondess

"EUGENICS." MERRIAM-WEBSTER.COM DICTIONARY, MERRIAM-WEBSTER,
[HTTPS://WWW.MERRIAM-WEBSTER.COM/DICTIONARY/EUGENICS](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/eugenics). ACCESSED 10 FEB. 2024.

Accessibility Quiz

1. Strangers do not typically ask what's wrong with me.
2. I can generally sit with my friends when I attend a concert or performance.
3. When I go out to eat or shop, I trust there will be a public bathroom I can use.
4. I can ride in cars, in rideshares, or on public transportation without worrying if they will accommodate my body.
5. I am protected by minimum wage laws.
6. When I dine out, waiters ask **me** (and not my companions) what I would like to order.
7. I can find housing that meets my physical needs.
8. Strangers do not typically offer medical advice to me.
9. Random people do not tell me that my body is caused by sin.
10. My daily cost of living is about the same as everyone else's.
11. At my workplace, I am assured that there is a plan for my escape in the event of a fire.
12. I can get married without worrying about losing my income.
13. I am not typically told people would rather be dead than live in my body.
14. Usually, people do not mock the way I walk or talk.
15. People do not ask to play with my limbs or accessories.

Excerpted from "My Body is Not a Prayer Request" by Amy Kenny (pp. 52 and 53).

Engage and Discuss:

Take the Quiz on p. 52-53

- How many “points” do you have?
- Have you ever considered these concerns before taking the quiz?
- How has your experience of public space shaped your understanding of what is “normal” and “natural” when it comes to bodies?



Listening:

Ableism in the Church

From pages 25-35,

“My Body is Not a Prayer
Request”

Dr. Amy Kenny



Engage and Discuss:

- Open for sharing/discussion
- Questions?
- What do you hope to learn during our second hour class during the next few weeks?





Thank you!