

“Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors”

Matthew 6: 12

As ever, please use (or discard!) these ideas as is most suitable for your group. Don't feel you have to use everything.

1. Read also 1 John 1: 8-9. Why is it important to confess our sins and ask God's forgiveness when we pray?
2. Why do we sometimes find it difficult to believe that God has forgiven us, and therefore to forgive ourselves? How can we have assurance of God's forgiveness, and accept ourselves as forgiven people?
3. Read Matthew 6: 14-15 and Matthew 18: 21-35. In this parable, the King represents God, and the first servant represents the way God treats us. So, in the parable –
 - a. Why did the king let the first servant go (v 27) instead of selling him and his family into slavery?
 - b. Why carried the cost of his unpayable debt? Who carried the cost of OUR unpayable debt, and how did He do it?
 - c. What made this servant's attitude to his fellow-servant so unreasonable?
4. What reasons do the scriptures we've read so far give us to show why it is so vital for us to forgive?
5. What resources does God give to help us do so?
6. Read Romans 12: 14-21.
 - a. V 14. How should we “bless” and pray for those who wrong us? What kind of things should we pray? How can praying for our enemies help us to forgive?
 - b. V. 16. Note that scripture encourages us to recognise that we will not be able to put every situation right, or to live in peace with everyone. It's a truth reflected in the quotation: *It takes one person to forgive, it takes two people to be reunited*. Does this discourage you, or does it help take pressure off situations of conflict you are in?
 - c. V. 18-19. In what way is it helpful to remember that it's God's right and prerogative to avenge and to impose justice on those who wrong us?
7. How would you answer someone who says, “It doesn't feel right to forgive, because that would make it seem that what they did was all right”?
8. What can we do when it seems impossible to forgive someone? What has helped members of the group to be able to do so?
9. What do you make of the following quote by Lewis Smedes? - *“To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you”*.

In conclusion:

Pray for one another in the situations where you either struggle to forgive or be forgiven.

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