

Cell Group Material : A forgiven and forgiving people

Welcome : One of our church members is famous all over Norfolk for making an animal noise. What animal noises are the members of the group good at!

Worship: Hymns Songs

Dear Lord and father of Mankind. There is a green hill far away. Amazing grace. My song is love unknown. Thank you for the Cross, He is the Lord, Jesus Christ I think upon your sacrifice, Lord I lift your name on high

What forgiveness is

Definition: Real forgiveness means looking steadily at the person and their sin, the sin that is left over without any excuse, after all allowances have been made, and seeing it in all its horror, dirt, meanness and malice, and nevertheless being willing to embrace the person - to restore a relationship with them and not to seek to punish them.

Question Does this agree with your idea of forgiveness. Is there anything you would add or take away?

Question Why is Forgiveness difficult?

In the sermon Gordon gave the following reasons why we should forgive.

As a response to our own forgiveness

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

As response to his command

Matthew 18:21

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

22:Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

To avoid bitterness

Hebrews 12:15

See to it that no-one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

In the community

In ourselves

As a response to his example

23:34:Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Question Which is the most important to you and why?

How to forgive

In the story of the prodigal son when did the father forgive? When did the Father embrace?

The willingness to forgive is unconditional – the embrace is conditional

Question: Is this distinction between the inner forgiveness and the expression externally of that forgiveness in the 'embrace' a useful one for you? Can you give any examples from your own experience?

Work

On a piece of paper privately write down situations in which you need to

1. Forgive God
2. Forgive the guilty
 - Those who are gone
 - Those you are in relationship with
3. Forgive yourself
4. To be forgiven..

Then in **five minutes** of quiet – express inwardly as if you were talking out aloud forgiveness to God,
to those who are gone,
to those you are in relationship with
and then to yourself.

Then ask God for forgiveness for not having forgiven them before.

In the quiet at the end the Work facilitator will read 1John 1: 8,9 *If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9:If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Further Work : What are the group going to do for a Social at Christmas – What non group members can you invite?