

*\*We recommend that you watch Talk 4: Forgiving One Another prior to watching the prayer practicum\**

## **Forgiveness Prayer Practicum**

**Speaker: Dianne Davis**

The time of forgiveness prayer ministry gives participants a chance to enter into the Lord's grace to forgive others as we are forgiven. You will lead participants through the prayer of forgiveness, found below. The prayer leader will lead participants through a list of common categories of people we need to forgive.

### **Facilitating the Prayer Time**

At the conclusion of the Forgiveness talk, a screen appears with a "Prayer of Forgiveness." Pause the DVD and lead the participants in the prayer that follows below.

#### **Sample Script**

*As Dave said in the teaching, we are now going to enter in the Forgiving One Another prayer time.*

*Jesus commands us to forgive, so forgiving others is an act of obedience to the Lord. Unforgiveness can be a barrier to our relationship with the Lord. It can bind us, and weigh us down. It can even make us physically sick. As Dave said in his talk, "it's like drinking a poison hoping the other person will die."*

*During Dave's teaching, you may have thought of someone you need to forgive. Some of you have gone through some terrible things and you might think to yourselves, "I don't want to forgive, it's not fair." But Jesus says in Matthew 6:12 "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." All the Lord asks of us is to choose to forgive and He will give you the grace to forgive the other person. This is a decision of our will, it's not based on our feelings.*

*We are going to have a prayer time in a few moments where you will be given the opportunity to choose to forgive someone.*

- *The prayer has blanks where we will insert persons who have hurt us. I will name categories of persons, and then offer a few questions that may help you realize people you need to forgive.*
- *We will have a moment of silence to help you think of someone in that category.*
- *Then we will insert the person we thought about and we will say the prayer out loud.*
- *It's important during this time to actually speak the name of the person who hurt you, even if it is just a barely audible whisper. You can say it so quietly that the person next to you can't hear you. But it's important for us to speak it out loud. Scripture says "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9-10). The spoken word is significant because it externalizes the decision of our will.*
- *We will repeat these steps for each category.*

*Please stand.*

[The Leader prays the following prayer or a simple conversational prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to come]

*Holy Spirit we invite you to be with us during this prayer time. We need you to help us choose to forgive so that we can be set free from unforgiveness. Come with your grace to free us from the pain and hurts we have experienced. We want to honor you and obey your command to forgive. Where we fall short in our weakness, give us your grace and strengthen and empower us to choose to forgive.*

### **Prayer of Forgiveness**

(This is the prayer on the DVD screen which you have paused)

*Father, I choose to forgive [INSERT NAME HERE]*

*I lay down my judgment at your cross.*

*Lord Jesus, I give [INSERT NAME HERE] a free gift of forgiveness.*

*I forgive them just as you forgave me.*

*I choose to live in the freedom Jesus has given me. Thank you, Father, for your mercy.*

*Amen.*

### **Categories:**

The 1<sup>st</sup> category is **parents:**

When you were growing up, were one or both of your parents physically or emotionally absent? Was your father who you needed him to be? Was your mother who you needed her to be? Were they physically or emotionally abusive? Maybe they favored a sibling over you or you were compared to sibling. Were you loved as you needed to be loved? Were you encouraged? Did your parents ever tell you they loved you and were proud of you?

**Spouse or ex-spouse:** Has your marriage not turned out to be what you expected? Has your spouse verbally, physically or emotionally abused you? Has your spouse been unfaithful to you? Have they struggled with substance abuse? Have they contributed to household finances the way you had expected?

**Siblings** Do you have a brother or sister who you fought with regularly? Did they say or do things that got you in trouble? Was there competitiveness between you instead of a bond of love? Is there ongoing resentment and bitterness between you?

**Grandparent's/Relatives** Did you have relatives, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, who terrified you or abused you? Were you rejected by them?

**Teacher/Coach** While you were in school or on a sports team, did you look up to a teacher, a professor or a coach? Were they unusually tough on you? Did your teacher ever say to you that you would not amount to anything? Did your teacher unfairly grade your papers and exams? Did your coach tell you that you weren't good enough?

**Friends** Were you physically or emotionally bullied? Did you share a deep confidence with a friend you thought you could trust, only to have them betray you? Did your friends turn others against you?

**Boyfriends/Girlfriends** Did you ever have a boyfriend or girlfriend who physically or emotionally hurt you? Were you rejected by someone you loved? Did this person cheat on you?

**Boss/Manager** Has someone at your job or in a position of authority over you at your job ever mistreated you? Have you been passed over for promotions or raises? Have you ever been targeted for your beliefs?

**Children** Have your children disappointed you by getting involved with drugs or alcohol? Have they abused you physically or emotionally? Have they rejected you after you have given them many years of love and monetary support? Are they not living a lifestyle that you expected as you raised them? If you are divorced from their other parent, have they chosen the other parent over you?

**Pastor or Church People** Were you abused in any way? Was your offer to help your parish rejected? Did you confide in someone at church who betrayed you? Were you gossiped about?

**Yourself** Often times, we look back on things we have done or things we have said and say "why did I do that? How could I have let myself do that?" Maybe you are thinking to yourself "*you don't know what I have done*" abortion, broken up family, addiction, sexual promiscuity, stealing. I encourage you to leave it all at the cross. Christ carried all our sins and nothing is too horrible because He has seen it all. To forgive ourselves is simply a declaration that we are in agreement with God, that we will not hold to higher standards than God, and we will not demand of ourselves more than He does. Let's take a bit longer to reflect and ask the Lord to give us the grace to forgive ourselves.

**God.** God is not in need of our forgiveness, because he has committed no sin. However, when we've experienced major suffering in our lives, often we blame God. Let's take another minute or so of silence to lay down any anger, pain, resentment or mistrust which we have held toward God at the foot of the cross [do not lead people through the prayer of forgiveness for this category].

**Ending prayer:**

*We thank you Lord for your forgiveness of our sins and your grace so that we can forgive others. Help us to make forgiving others a normal part of our lives as your disciples. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.*

I encourage you to take advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation to confess these areas of unforgiveness and any resentment you have had toward God. Forgiving one another is intended to be a normal part of life as disciples of Jesus, and this prayer time is something you will want to incorporate in your daily life.