

Why are we here?

1. To affirm whether you are called to be married or not.

2. To allow the Holy Spirit to reveal what needs to change or be adjusted in your life so that you have the greatest success at marriage or remarriage.

3. To heal from the past, confront your fears and concerns of the present and future.

4. To learn more about yourself and the Lord’s best for you versus your best.

5. To build an accountable group of friends all on the same journey.

Prayer Structure

1. Form groups of no more than 4 people

2. Discuss your answers as a group, allowing everyone to share; take notes to use during the prayer portion

3. Pray out loud *options*

 • You can read each other answers you wrote down in the form of prayer

 • You can pray for each other in whatever direction

 • Everyone can pray for themselves

 • One person can pray for everyone

Pray for a Mate guidelines:

• Be on time to end on time.

• Respect privacy and/or boundaries

• If your group finishes praying early, please remain quiet until everyone is done.



FORGIVENESS

* **ICEBREAKER**: Find someone you don't know well and share a time when you had problems forgiving.  [10 minutes]
* **BIG BOARD**: Write on a big board or have folks share out loud their answers. [10 minutes]
* **BIG GROUP DISCUSSION/Devotion on the Topic of Forgiveness** [10 minutes]
* **SMALL GROUP 1: Forgiving Others** [10 minutes]

**Read/Discuss:** One word, “forgiveness,” only 11 letters in length, but so hard to put into action when others have wronged us. Countries have gone to war, families have been torn apart and relationships irreparably damaged as a result of unforgiveness. Not dealing with forgiveness from past relationships can come up again in our present or future relationships. The word “forgiveness” is a verb, it requires action. I can say that I forgive, but do my actions reflect that too? In forgiving, we extend mercy to others for past wrongs and this is the foundation from which healing can begin and trust can develop.

Share an experience when you struggled to forgive someone and how you felt.

***Read Matthew 18:21-22:*** *Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times? Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.”*

***Read Ephesians 4:32:*** *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

**Q: What does God say about forgiveness?**

[Pray using the guidelines.] [15 minutes]

* **SMALL GROUP 2: Forgiving Ourselves** [10 minutes]

**Read/Discuss:** Are you mad at yourself for something that you did 20 years ago? You asked God to forgive you but you didn't receive the forgiveness; faith is not only asking for His forgiveness but accepting it as well. Have you heard the comparison between our pasts and our cars: there's a reason why the windshield is so large and the rear view mirror is so small! We, as children of God, are to live for our future, a future which has no room for the mistakes of the past. Let go and let God. Forgiving ourselves lifts the stronghold that Satan has on us, allowing us to fully experience God's peace and joy.

Share a time when you have had problems forgiving yourself. If this doesn't apply to you, be willing to pray/intercede on others' behalves.

***Read Philippians 3:13:*** *Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

***Read Philippians 4:6-7:*** *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

**Q: What does God say about forgiving ourselves?**

[Pray using the guidelines.] [15 minutes]

* **SMALL GROUP 3: How can a forgiving heart improve our future relationships? [10 minutes]**

**Read/Discuss:** Learning to forgive others now while single will help prepare you for learning how to forgive a mate if God leads you to marriage. Forgiving doesn't mean we have to forget but it does mean we have to stop keeping score. When our words and actions truly bestow forgiveness, we are healing. . .  healing ourselves and taking another step to having healthier relationships in the future.

***Read Ephesians 4:31-32:*** *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*

***Read Colossians 3:13:*** *Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

**Q: What are steps we can take to begin practicing forgiveness on a daily basis?**

[Pray using the guidelines.] [15 minutes]

**What are some of the results of not forgiving? [15 minutes]**

* We can experience resentment that continues to build over time
* We can become physically sick and it can impact our mental health
* We can have problems moving forward and forgiving other people with whom we are in relationships

**WHAT TO DO?**

1. When we are in a situation in which we need to forgive, we can focus on God and our relationship with Him, spending time in His Word and praying. *Luke 6:37: Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven.*

2. If we continue experiencing having to forgive someone over and over for the same thing, we may need to get advice from a professional counselor, minister, support or accountability group (Divorce Care, Griefshare, etc.).

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