

And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And do not bring us to the time of trial,

but rescue us from the evil one.

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matthew 6:12-15

Forgiveness makes good business for self-help books. How do I forgive? How can I let go? We often hear that forgiveness is good for you. It makes you feel better. All easy to say. But what do you do when hurt and pain keep coming back when you least want to think about them? When resentment is eating at you and you can think of nothing else? Maybe we can all forgive little things, but what about the big things, the things that break up part of who you are? Or what about forgiving ourselves – sometimes that is the hardest task of them all.

Forgiveness is sometimes humanly impossible. I might not want to forgive. I might not even be able to think of forgiving, and yet holding on to the anger hurts me more than the offender. The person who hurt me may not want to be forgiven. It is tempting to opt for “forgiveness lite”, hiding from the enormity of what has happened and cutting to a quick solution, trying to ignore or diminish what has happened.

Sometimes, all that we can do is say, ‘I want to forgive’. Or maybe, ‘I want to want to forgive!’ And see where the journey takes us. Offer the whole thing to God in prayer: a willingness to be changed, or an honest admission that we simply cannot forgive. God can multiply the little that we bring, just as Jesus multiplied a few loaves and fishes to feed thousands. Forgiveness takes time, but God is patient. And has our best interest at heart: God knows that in forgiveness, we will always find healing and freedom, however long and painful the road to get there.

A “Have a Go” habit: Wash and go

- Read [Psalm 51:2](#) “Wash me thoroughly...and cleanse me from my sin”. Repeat these words to yourself, through the day.
- Use [The Lord’s Prayer](#) each lunchtime. Repeat slowly... forgiving as we are forgiven is a daily habit not a one-off act.



Looking for support?

Explore services and organisations that can offer help and support

A heart traced out by sparklers in bright pink.

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Next reflection

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The *#FaithAndMentalHealth* reflections were written by Rev Prof Chris Cook. Ruth Rice developed the "Have a go" habits.

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