

Parish Meeting Prayers

For use in September, 2023

Introduction

Leader Peter asks Jesus, “How often should I forgive?” Jesus’ answer reminds us that just as God always forgives us, there can be no limit to our forgiveness of others. This is challenging stewardship for life.

Opening Prayer

All Forgiving Father, you taught us in the life and death of Jesus to forgive from our hearts. Remind us daily of this basic Christian action, no matter how serious the betrayal of trust. We ask this through Jesus, crucified, risen and living with us in his Spirit. Amen.

Word of God Matthew 18:21-35

Reader A reading from Gospel of Matthew After the reading, pause for silent reflection

Optional Discuss these questions in two’s or three’s *The reading is on the reverse side.*

1. From your own experience, discuss what is involved in forgiving someone?
2. Say the Our Father. Comment on the lines of this prayer that relate to forgiving.

Response (Taken from Matthew 18:21-35)

Side 1 “Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive? As many as seven times?”

Side 2 Jesus’ answer cannot be reasoned away. There is no exception.

Side 1 “Jesus answered, ‘I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.’ ”

Side 2 As we ponder Jesus’ answer, help us to take this teaching to heart.

Side 1 Jesus answered the cruel servant who was to be punished: “So will my heavenly Father do to you unless each of you forgives your brother from your heart.”

Side 2 Lord, your clear words help me to realize the seriousness of forgiving no matter the injury done to us. Help us always to forgive.

Petitions Individuals add intentions here.

Closing Prayer

All Generous God, we thank you for your goodness to us. Help us to forgive others as stewards of the way of life we were taught by Jesus, who gave his life for our salvation. Strengthen us through your Spirit. We pray through Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew

Peter approached Jesus and asked him,
“Lord, if another member of the church sins against me,
how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?
Jesus answered, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.
That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king
who decided to settle accounts with his servants.
When he began the accounting,
a debtor was brought before him who owed him
a huge amount.
Since he had no way of paying it back,
his master ordered him to be sold,
along with his wife, his children, and all his property,
in payment of the debt.

At that the servant fell down, did him homage, and said,
‘Be patient with me and I will pay you back in full.’
Moved with compassion the master of that servant
let him go and forgave him the loan.
When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants
who owed him a much smaller amount.
He seized him and started to choke him, demanding,
‘Pay back what you owe.’
Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him
‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’
But he refused.
Instead, he had the fellow servant put in prison
until he paid back the debt.

Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened,
they were deeply disturbed and went to their master
and reported the whole affair.
His master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant!
I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to.
Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant as I had pity on you?
Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers
until he should pay back the whole debt.

So will my heavenly Father do to you
unless each of you forgives your brother from your heart.”