

## ***Forgiveness — A Missional Practice***

*Missional practices: cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ's mission.*

**Purpose:** To forgive for personal well-being and for healing broken relationships by releasing feelings of guilt, anger, or disappointment. Forgiveness is one way we can embody Christ's peace and fulfill our purpose as a church: *The restoring of persons to healthy or righteous relationships with God, others, themselves, and the earth is at the heart of the purpose of your journey as a people of faith.* (Doctrine and Covenants 163:2b) Forgiveness is what a person can decide for one's self. Forgiveness allows for reconciliation. When both parties decide to forgive, reconciliation can occur.

"There are three kinds of forgiveness, all interrelated. There is self-forgiveness, which enables us to release our guilt and perfectionism. There is the forgiveness we extend to others and receive from them, intimates and enemies alike. And there is the forgiveness of God that assures us of our worth and strengthens us for this practice." (Spirituality and Practice: Resources for Spiritual Journeys at <http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/practices/practices.php?id=9>)

*Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'* - Matthew 18:21-22 NRSV

*Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.* - Ephesians 4:32 NRSV

**Steps:** There are many ways to begin. Adapt the following in ways that work for you:

1. Affirm to yourself that forgiveness is difficult and that it takes time.
2. Acknowledge to yourself the hurt you have not been able to forgive. Identify any feelings you might have, such as anger, denial, guilt, shame, or embarrassment.
3. Imagine what it would be like to no longer have these feelings.
4. Imagine a future that could be both for you and others.
5. Pray daily for understanding, healing, and release from your feelings.
6. Confide in a trusted friend by sharing your struggle and seeking her or his perspective.
7. Trust and risk taking steps towards healing. (The counsel of a friend, pastor, professional counselor, or spiritual director can be helpful).
8. Explore various ways to resolve your feelings to find healing.
  - Read and pray the Psalms.
  - Confess your part in the conflict or misunderstanding.

- *Let the Spirit breathe!* (Doctrine and Covenants 162:2) Take a deep breath and breathe in the goodness of the profound presence and purposes of God.
- Allow yourself to be drawn to people who you can bless in simple ways by you being aware of them as persons of worth.
- Offer this prayer if not yet ready to forgive, but seeking the ability to forgive:  
*Dear God, for now I am unable to forgive. I have been hurt too much. When I think about what happened, I just feel pain and confusion. Help me. Heal me. Transform me. I can't do this alone. I wait for you. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.* (Adapted from Forgiveness, Practicing Our Faith, no date at <http://www.practicingourfaith.org/forgiveness>)