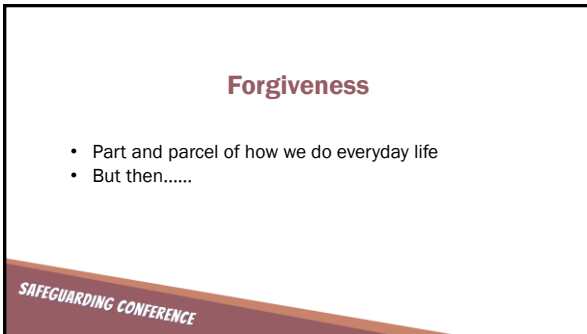




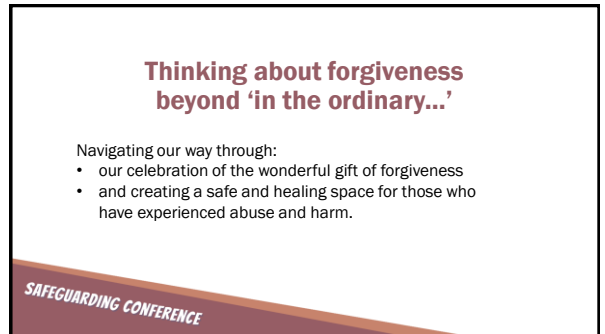
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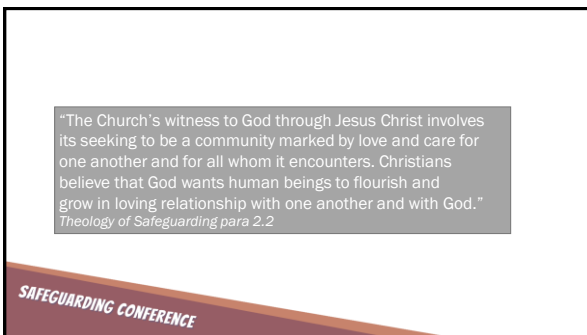
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5



6

...and the challenge of being able to forgive that which really feel like it's unforgivable.



"Everyone thinks forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive."
- C.S. Lewis

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"We were greatly exercised by the question as to how readily victims of sexual offences and survivors of abuse should be expected to forgive their abusers. This forgiveness has sometimes been bluntly commanded within the Church, but to expect immediate forgiveness has been pastorally unwise, grievously insensitive and unrealistic. In the long run God calls us to forgive our enemies and his commands are for our good; in the short run it may be both impossible and undesirable, though it may eventually happen almost as a 'by-product' at the end of a long, hard process of recovery. It may be quite wrong for an abused person to meet the offender again, and always wrong for an offender to try to coerce a victim into forgiveness and reconciliation."

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The Church and Sex Offenders (2000)

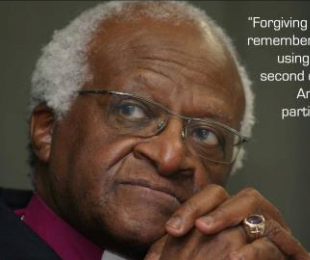
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Three misunderstandings to avoid

Firstly.....
"Forgiveness involves forgetting behaviour that has caused harm so that past sin and behaviour is blotted out and the forgiven sinner can start again with a blank piece of paper."

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"Forgiving is not forgetting, its actually remembering - remembering and not using your right to hit back. It's a second chance for a new beginning. And the remembering part is particularly important. Especially if you don't want to repeat what happened."

Desmond Tutu

www.TutuFoundationUSA.org

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10

Three misunderstandings to avoid

Firstly...
"Forgiveness involves forgetting behaviour that has caused harm so that past sin and behaviour is blotted out and the forgiven sinner can start again with a blank piece of paper."

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Three misunderstandings to avoid

Secondly...
"forgiveness means the cancelling of debts and obligations."

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"Forgiving and being reconciled to our enemies or our loved ones are not about pretending that things are other than they are. It is not about patting one another on the back and turning a blind eye to the wrong. True reconciliation exposes the awfulness, the abuse, the hurt, the truth. It could even sometimes make things worse. It is a risky undertaking but in the end it is worthwhile, because in the end only an honest confrontation with reality can bring real healing. Superficial reconciliation can bring only superficial healing."

- DESMOND TUTU

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13

Three misunderstandings to avoid

Secondly...
"forgiveness means the cancelling of debts and obligations."

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14

Three misunderstandings to avoid

Thirdly...
"that a person who has abused should be treated as wholly reformed and good."

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15



Forgiveness is taking seriously the awfulness of what has happened when you are treated unfairly. Forgiveness is not pretending that things are other than the way they are.

Desmond Tutu

QuoteNova.net

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16

Three misunderstandings to avoid

Thirdly...
"that a person who has abused should be treated as wholly reformed and good."


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17

Thinking about this as the 'People called Methodists:'

Waves of Grace:
Prevenient, Justifying, Sanctifying

Means of Grace:
Prayer, Searching the Scriptures, The Lord's Supper, Fasting, Conferring



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18

How do we grow as communities that can be forgiving AND safe places for all?

By holding these things together in creative tension:.....

- In emphasising the miracle of new life, never forget how hard change can be.
- In developing a safe place for all, never forget that God's renewing and forgiving power – as supremely displayed on the cross – is at the heart of our Gospel and our life in community.

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**What more can we do to grow as safe, inclusive communities....
....shaped by God's desire to see everyone flourish through healing and forgiveness?**



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