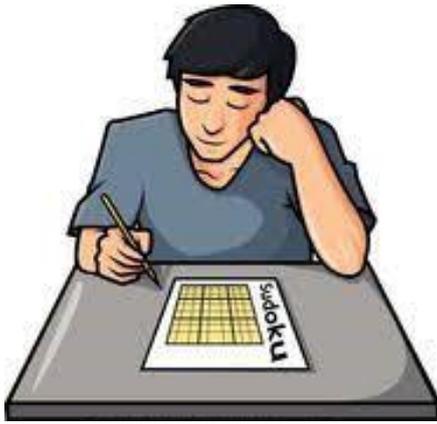




Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.

### **Philippians 3:13b-14 'Pressing on to the Goal'**

<sup>13</sup> ... this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.



Until I married Robert I had no idea how to tackle a Sudoku grid, but once he taught me, I

got hooked and when I started one I had to keep at it until I got it right. Recently I was given a book of puzzles, some of which have been quite beyond my ability and I've learned not to go back and try again when I have obviously gone wrong. What a huge relief that has been! Now I can put a big X next to the ones I can't finish and move on.

I think that too often in life we fail to put things behind us and flounder in the muddle of the past. We allow ourselves to dwell on the wrong things – mistakes, errors or sins that we regret – instead of banishing them from our minds. We need to be able to let go of sins and, having repented, to move on. If we hear Jesus' final words to the woman caught in adultery, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again", (John 8:11), it helps us to remember what a forgiving God we believe in.

Our past mistakes and failures can be tools of the devil and we need to stop allowing ourselves to be manipulated. Paul says in the passage above, "This one thing I do, forgetting what is behind." Paul knows that to be all that God wants him to be, he can't focus on yesterday – yesterday is over. We must let go of our guilt and grief, our hurt and grudges. We must let go of the past, so that we can get on with the present and look to the future. In this sense, forgetting actually means refusing to allow the past to affect us any longer.

Certainly we must learn from our mistakes but we mustn't dwell on them. There's a big difference. We can't keep beating ourselves up about what we've done, or failed to do. Many of us are harbouring things in our hearts that God has long since forgiven and forgotten. Yet we won't forgive ourselves.

Part of God's good news is that his story never ends in defeat. It ends in victory. So if we're not victorious at this moment we must keep moving forward and forget what lies behind. It's not as if we're different from anyone else, as Paul writes to the Romans, "we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," (3:23), but God's forgiveness is always promised to us, all we have to do is ask – and having received that forgiveness we must put the past behind us.

### **Prayer**

Heavenly Father,

We pray that you will help us to let go of all the fears and worries, problems and doubts, guilt and disappointments that often fill our hearts and minds.

Help us to take every thought captive and to hand it over to you. And having received your forgiveness for our mistakes may we be ready to put the past behind us.

You have told us to think about whatever is lovely and pure and holy and good, fill our souls with your love and peace we pray.

May we turn our eyes upon Jesus and look to him day by day.

In Jesus' name we pray,  
Amen.