

So there you have it - the ministry of cake: giving and receiving, sharing and accepting, blessing and being blessed. Hospitality: simple yet profound; ordinary yet extraordinary; maybe even radical? And definitely sacred.



Jesus said that whenever we share food, we should remember him. It is very good then, that here in the centre of Manchester, as GMCC and the Methodist Centre work together; there is an opportunity to remember Jesus every time *Café Central* and *Befrienders* are open. Food is shared: people are fed meals, have tea and coffee, food parcels are given out, and there is cake - always. There are cooks and cake bakers, there are volunteers and staff, customers and clients, those who receive the food and those with whom they eat it. Just like the boy who brought the bread and fish to Jesus, people give what they can, and hungry people are fed.

Those of you who uphold this work and ministry with your prayers are part of the hospitality and welcome, and through your faithful prayer you offer much blessing. We ask for things in prayer, but it is also important that we open ourselves up to receiving whatever God gives us - and whoever he chooses to bring us the gift. Above all God is generous: he gave us this beautiful world and he gave us his son, Jesus. Jesus loved to give, too: nets full of fish, more wine than people could drink, enough food for everyone, with plenty to spare. As we pray through this prayer letter I encourage us to be blessed each day as we remember to open our hands to receive from God, because he pours his grace upon us like a never-ending stream and he uses the most unlikely people to do it. I encourage you, as you pray, to pour yourself a cuppa and cut yourself a slice of cake as a reminder of God's abundant generosity and blessing, and be blessed.

In your city streets will you be God's heart?

Will you listen to the voiceless?

Will you stop and eat, and when friendships start,
will you share your faith with the faithless?

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**HMP MANCHESTER; HMP FOREST BANK; HMP BUCKLEY HALL;
HMP & YOI STYAL; HMP YOI THORN CROSS &
GREATER MANCHESTER COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY
PRISON PRAYER LETTER JULY 2018**

The 'ministry of cake' (or radical hospitality)

The one and only instruction that Jesus gave about how we should worship was that we should eat together and remember him. When Jesus ate with his friends, he would bless the food and then his friends and followers would be blessed. We too can share in that blessing today. Everything we have – our food, our clothes, each other, the whole world – is a gift to us from God, so we thank him and praise him for his total generosity. He asks us to love him – and to show our love for him by loving and looking after the people around us.

Food, and sharing food with other people, features a lot in the stories about Jesus and the stories he told, and there's a lot about them in the Old Testament too. In Genesis 18 Abraham went out and offered hospitality to his unexpected visitors. He didn't wait to be asked. In doing so he was blessed through the message they brought. When we invite people in we too gain blessings. During the feeding of the 5,000, the boy offered his lunch and Jesus accepted it. He didn't turn his nose up at it, or laugh: he accepted it. Hospitality isn't only about giving, it's about receiving, from everyone and especially the most unlikely candidates. Hospitality is a two-way street.

Jesus took ordinary things - like bread, wine, water and fish - and made them extraordinarily special. Today we can offer ordinary things like tea, coffee, biscuits, meals and cake. Yes, definitely cake!

It's not all about giving or handing out charity. It's also about accepting and receiving from those we consider needy. We are all needy in some way. Frank, an alcoholic who attends church regularly, was made to feel welcome and included when coffee and biscuits or cake were served after worship. But he really came to feel he was part of the congregation the day they ate the cake he baked for them in a biscuit tin. Hospitality is not about giving tea and cake; it's about sitting down with one another, sharing a pot of tea and eating cake from the same plate.



JULY 2018

1. Pray for D, released from Manchester in June, asking that he finds accommodation and some stability
2. Pray for A, who keeps faithful to God in difficult circumstances, asking that he will continue to find strength in his faith
3. Pray for M as he struggles with questions about some doctrines of the Christian faith, asking that he will grow in faith through his questioning and will emerge with a strong and enduring relationship with God
4. Pray for D, that he might know a deeper walk with God
5. Pray for the development of a key-worker scheme in Styal prison; for those who will take up the new positions and the women they will support
6. Pray for M, as he struggles to come to terms with the crime he committed, that he may know the forgiveness of God
7. Pray that A, who is desperately seeking God, will come to faith
8. Pray for P, asking that through the Holy Spirit he will be empowered to overcome his addictions and will come to serve God
9. Give thanks that R has received Jesus as his saviour and healer, and that he is now attending a church and is in full time employment
10. Pray for J, who has asked for prayer for himself and his family that they might be kept safe and receive God's blessing
11. Pray for L, who wants change in his life after many years of going in and out of prison. We ask that he will keep his determination and that change will become a reality in his life
12. Pray for the new peer support group at GMCC, that those who would benefit will find out about it and get involved
13. Pray for N who was recently released from prison, and who is living on the streets and using drugs. We ask that he will receive and engage with the help he needs, and that God will act to bring change in his life
14. Pray for L, who is hoping to get accommodation with a Christian supported housing trust
15. Pray for W, who is very young and has learning difficulties, with no family or friends in his life, asking that he will find support and guidance
16. Pray for A as he studies the Word, with a hope of one day being ordained
17. Pray for 2 prisoners at Buckley Hall who were confirmed in the Christian faith in May, that they will continue to grow in faith and understanding

JULY 2018

18. Pray for G, who will be released in August, and for the team at Buckley Hall Chaplaincy as they try to help him secure accommodation
19. D has been released, and is desperate not to return to jail but does not know how to change. Pray for wisdom and guidance for him, and the courage to change
20. Pray for W, K and S, who have reconnected with their faith while in jail and want to maintain this when released
21. D, M and L are to be released over the summer and are all feeling anxious about adjusting to life outside prison. Pray that they will adjust well and will find whatever support they need to help them
22. Pray for M, whose son is very poorly at the moment
23. Pray for K, whose dad died just before he came into custody, that he may find comfort
24. T is feeling very angry about a decision by probation and is expressing this in self-destructive ways; pray that he will find a better way of managing his feelings
25. Pray for J whose self-harm and behaviour are getting worse, that he will find a way to break out of the negative cycle that he seems to be in
26. Pray for M, an older prisoner who is struggling to adjust to being in custody
27. Pray for the work that is beginning to strengthen working links between GMCC and Styal prison chaplaincy, that this will enable us to better meet the needs of women who have been in prison
28. Pray for D, who is struggling with anxiety, that he will find peace of mind and self-acceptance
29. Pray for R and J who have made contact with GMCC prior to their release as they prepare to leave custody
30. Pray for G, that he will find a solution to the challenges that he is currently facing
31. Pray for all the volunteers who give of their time in the prisons and at GMCC, giving thanks for their dedication and contribution to our work