

married couple from Bolton, thus I found myself crossing the yard to enter the wing where I would probably meet men who had been convicted of crimes similar to what had been committed against me at various stages of my life. Yet I felt no fear; a great peace, even Joy came upon me!

I had been through many sessions of counselling, healing and deliverance through the years; and I felt that God was now saying to me “You’re all sorted Kath, you are free of your past now, you’re ready to reach out to the guilty ones in My Name.” I remembered Noel Proctor in his book ‘The Cross Behind Bars’ talking about being in “exactly the place God wanted him to be at exactly the right moment in time”; and I knew that this was where God wanted me to be.

For the past 14 years I have been privileged to introduce many men to the Bible and Jesus for the first time in their lives; and to help others towards re-discovering the faith they once had.

One significant moment came one Sunday evening when one of the group decided that he would pray for me to have a safe journey home. He put his hand on my head and quoted from Exodus when the Israelites were saved by the blood of the lamb smeared around the doorposts with the hyssop branches; he prayed the power of the blood of Jesus to protect me. In a previous moment I realised that this man was equally as forgiven as I was and that Jesus poured out his blood for this man, just as much as for me.

And that’s why I’m still on the wing every week; and quite often at the chapel services on Sunday as well, worshipping alongside my group.



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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 NOVEMBER 2018**

**How I came to Strangeways and Why I’m Still There**

I first arrived at HMP Manchester (Strangeways) in 2004, escorted by a wonderful man named John Powell who was part of the team which led Bible Studies on the wings every week. I had met John several months before at a meeting of the Gideon Society, where I was the guest speaker giving my testimony. John was the chairman of the Manchester Branch and during the supper he told me about his voluntary work in HMP Manchester. I was immediately interested, as I had long felt drawn to extending the love of Jesus to prisoners, partly in gratitude that God had rescued and saved me from several dark paths which I had been on in my life. I expressed my interest to John, who at first did not give a positive response. I realised later that he was taking his time to decide whether or not I was suitable for this ministry; not everybody is.



Shortly after this John phoned and invited me to go into prison and work for one evening with the team, with a view to joining them. On arriving at Strangeways John told me that I would be going onto one of the wings with 2 or 3 others, but he said “not with me” he explained that he led the group on the V.P/O.P wing; (Own Protection and Vulnerable Prisoners). These men are kept apart from the main population as they are liable to be bullied or intimidated by other prisoners for various reasons; among these would be sex-offenders. John felt that Mary Causer, who was the co-ordinator at that time, would deem it to be too challenging for me on my first visit especially considering some of my own life experiences. However when we arrived in the chaplaincy office Mary wasn’t there and they all just went off to their usual wings. I by default was left to go with John after all, plus a

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1. Give thanks for harvest events in prisons last month, and for the generosity of staff and residents who brought food for those in need.
2. Pray for N and J in Manchester, both of whom have lost their fathers recently.
3. Pray for R, who has been seen as a problem prisoner, but has been making good progress more recently, that he will continue on this new path.
4. Pray for S, as he approaches his parole hearing, that whatever the outcome he will be able to accept it, and that whenever he is released he will maintain his determination to live a new life, free of crime.
5. Pray for the men participating in the Alpha Course at Buckley Hall, that they may grow in faith and understanding of the Gospel.
6. L is no longer in prison, but continues to struggle with addiction. Pray that he will find strength to overcome this and the miracle that he says he needs will take place.
7. M is up for Parole soon. Pray that he might get a place in the hostel that he believes will help him.
8. L has left prison and is in a Christian rehabilitation project. Pray that she will stay strong and focussed on her recovery.
9. Two prisoners, both with the initial R, are very mentally unwell and in need of help. Pray for healing, support and peace for them both.
10. Pray for the work of the Prison Fellowship in prisons across the region, particularly in the delivery of their Sycamore Tree programme. Pray that they will be able to continue to resource this, and in particular that new volunteers will be identified.
11. On this 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World War One Armistice, pray for all prisoners and prison staff who have served in the forces and for peace in our nations, our communities and our prisons.
12. Pray for H, who is actively seeking a relationship with Jesus; may he experience the love and the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.
13. Pray for S, whose baby has died and who is very upset to be in jail at this time.
14. Pray for K, that her application to complete her Release on Temporary Licence at Shine at the MEC might be successful.
15. L has been recalled and is very unhappy about it; pray for acceptance and peace for him.
16. Pray for O, a vulnerable young man with a complex history, that he will find the support and services that he needs.

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17. Pray for J as he approaches his release, and seeks accommodation to be nearer his family.
18. D is a very aggressive prisoner who struggles to take responsibility for his actions; pray that he will grow in self-awareness, be healed of past hurts and come to a point where he can live peaceably and recognise his own faults.
19. L has been released to live in Nottingham, and has twin babies. Pray that she will cope with the pressures she faces, that she will stay strong on her journey of recovery and that her relationship with the babies' father may strengthen. Also pray for someone to help her get to church on Sundays.
20. Pray for all those men and women in prison who struggle with mental health issues and for the prison staff who seek to support them.
21. L is struggling to overcome his addictions, and has recognised that he needs a miracle. Pray that this miracle might occur and that he will be able to live a life free of substance abuse.
22. Pray for K, an elderly prisoner, who is struggling at the moment.
23. Pray for D, formerly a chapel orderly at Styal, that she may settle in to the prison to which she has moved, and will continue to grow in faith.
24. Pray for the families of those in prison, and especially for those who are separated by large distances.
25. Pray for M, who wants to begin to address some of the issues from his past. May he seek and receive the right support to help him to do this safely, and find healing and resolution.
26. Pray for those involved in implementing new approaches in prisons in our region, and those who will benefit, that these may be more effective in enabling people to make a fresh start after serving their sentences.
27. Pray for K, who is tired of being in jail and wants very much to change, that he might succeed in this aim and maintain his determination.
28. Pray for all prison visitors and volunteers, and for all the prisoners with whom they have contact.
29. Pray for P, who is struggling with mental health issues and spiritual concerns, for release from his worries and healing of his mind.
30. Pray for all victims of crime, that they may recover from their experiences and the harm done to them.