

I believe what all human beings are searching for in the name of 'love' is the assurance that they have value, they matter, that their lives have meaning and that they belong somewhere and to someone. I believe this hunger is within all people because we were created by God and designed to know, love and serve God. Until we return to God, we will always feel this hunger, an emptiness. St Augustine said that 'our hearts are restless until they find our rest in Thee'.

It is only in God that we can understand our true value; that God so loved the world that he sent his only son so that all who believe in him would not die but have eternal life. The bible tells us that each of us is fearfully and wonderfully made. Through faith in God we discover that there is a plan and purpose for our lives, to give us hope and a future. And, with God as our Father, we can know a deep sense of connection in him and belonging to the family of the church.



Love does make the world go round and our world today is in desperate need of more love. But true love is not the sentimental, romantic or sexual feeling we hear about in our culture. True love is described and celebrated by St Paul in his first letter to the church in Corinth:

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails"

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GREATER MANCHESTER COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY

PRISON PRAYER LETTER FEBRUARY 2019

The month of February is always dominated by Valentine's Day. No sooner are the Christmas cards out of the shop, the valentines cards are in. Window displays are full of red hearts and red roses, stuffed toys and padded cards. All this is meant to be a celebration of love, but what kind of love are we thinking of on this day?



If you asked most people what they mean by 'love', how they define it, I think most people would say that it's a feeling. An incredible, powerful, exciting feeling that can make us feel inexpressibly happy, like we are floating on air. Our society is obsessed with this kind of love; books, films, songs, TV shows are often centred on people falling madly in love, having problems, overcoming difficulties, and then, finally, true love triumphing over all. We are told that this love will last a lifetime and it will make us happy and complete forever, providing we can find 'the one', our soul mate.

There is no doubt that falling in love, especially for the first time, is a remarkable feeling. It's like being on cloud 9. The trouble is, cloud 9 is great to visit but no one can live there. When love is seen as just a feeling, that means it can and will change over time because no one can promise to 'feel' a certain way for the rest of their lives. If people and their relationships rely on the buzz of being in love, then once that buzz fades, as it is bound to as the relationship develops, it can lead people to believe that the love has gone. If we expect another person to always make us feel happy and fulfilled, we are putting a huge burden on another human being and setting ourselves up for failure and disappointment. Many people can spend a lifetime searching for this love, going from relationship to relationship, but never being satisfied.

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- 1 J is due to be released from HMP Hindley today, and is anxious about his future; pray that he will get the support that he needs to make a new start.
- 2 Pray for R, who continues to be very destructive and is in need of consistent help.
- 3 B has just finished the Alpha Course at Buckley Hall and hopes to go to an open prison soon; pray that he will continue to grow in Christ.
- 4 M has been recalled and says he does not know why; he is very angry about this. Pray that he may find peace and insight.
- 5 J's wife died a few weeks ago and he is struggling to arrange the funeral; pray that he will find the help that he needs and pray for comfort for him and all those who will miss his wife.
- 6 L has made a decision to follow Jesus and has said that he is on a journey of discovery; pray for him on this journey that he will grow in faith and love.
- 7 Pray for M, and for the many other prisoners who self-harm regularly, that they may find peace and healing.
- 8 Pray for R, that he may find hope.
- 9 J and P both lost their mums last year; pray for them both in their bereavement.
- 10 N has experienced the power of God in his life and looks like a new man; continue to pray for him that he may be sustained by his faith and grow in understanding.
- 11 Pray for H, who is always in trouble but is searching for peace.
- 12 L was released from HMP Manchester in January; pray that he is doing well and is getting the support he needs.
- 13 P has been clean of drugs for 3 months; pray that he will maintain this as he helps others in their walk with God.
- 14 S is keen to be baptised by full immersion; pray that he will have the opportunity.
- 15 Pray for B, A, P and others who have been drawn closer to God through attending Bible Study groups in prison.

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- 16 Pray for J, who feels stuck in the system and wants to move on, that he might find the strength and the means to change his life.
- 17 N continues to attend chapel at Buckley Hall and his heart is softening; pray for God's continued work in his life.
- 18 D's mental health and behaviour are deteriorating and he needs more specialised help; pray that this may reach him.
- 19 A new Sycamore Tree group begins today in HMP Styal; pray for the women who take part and for the team delivering it.
- 20 W is struggling to adjust following release; pray for him that he will find support and will reintegrate successfully, and for his mum who offers him a lot of support.
- 21 Pray for J, who is worried about his family and feels powerless to help them.
- 22 O says that, since the chaplaincy team prayed for him, he is no longer hearing voices and has stopped self-harming; pray that this effect will be long-term and that he will continue to walk in grace.
- 23 K has recently begun to seek support from GMCC; pray that he will be drawn to make real change in his life.
- 24 Pray for D, who is struggling to come to terms with a long sentence.
- 25 Pray for the religious services held in prisons, that those who want to attend will be released from their wings.
- 26 Give thanks for the changes in R since he began attending Chapel events, and pray that he will continue to grow in knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.
- 27 Pray for all those clients of GMCC who have not been seen recently, that God will hold them safe and guide them back if they need further support
- 28 S is due to be released in March and is very anxious; pray for him as this time approaches.