

HMP MANCHESTER; HMP FOREST BANK; HMP BUCKLEY HALL;
HMP & YOI STYAL; HMP YOI THORN CROSS & HMP HINDLEY

GREATER MANCHESTER COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY

PRISON PRAYER LETTER OCTOBER 2019

This friend took him to a church, which at first he refused to enter. However once realising there was nothing else around he ventured in where a lovely church member welcomed him in with open arms. This was the first time in his life that Tom had been welcomed so openly. On entering further he saw a room full of people engaged in worship, singing their hearts out with arms held high. Tom was uncomfortable, so he left. Then he remembered the offer of a free lunch and went back inside. He continued to observe the worship and prayer thinking "this is not a bit of me". Yet he stayed and started contemplating what this was.

He concluded that this many people would not be acting like this if there was not something or someone to it. So he started speaking to God. "Where have you been God?" "If you're real how could you have let this happen to me?" Tom was then filled with peace love and acceptance. "It felt like love cuddled me". However seconds later he was reminded of all of the things he had done wrong. He had hurt people, stolen from them and caused so much pain. The heaviness and weight of what he had done came crashing down. But then "the feeling intensified", the love got stronger.

Tom knew then that God was real. He knew that this was truth. The events of this day and subsequent conversations with his friend led Tom to read the Bible. He hid this search from those around him, still filled with doubts because of his past, what he had done, what he had been told he was. But the more of the Bible he read the more he "realised that he'd been lied to all of his life".

"There was the truth and the freedom that came from just reading His [God's] word that I never knew would change my life but it has"

"I had money, a house, friends; I did what I wanted but was never satisfied"

"I never really knew who I was. I knew who I was told I was. I never knew the truth. The way God sees me"

This is Tom's story from searching, to finding the freedom that we all can find in Jesus.

Toms name has been changed for this story*

Contact us at: GMCC Methodist Central Buildings Oldham Street M1 1JQ

Telephone: 0161 236 2462 Email: chaplain@gmcconline.org

Please make cheques payable to: **GM Prison Prayer**
and state if you would like to **Gift Aid it**

Check out our Facebook Page or www.gmccsupport.org

For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. Galatians 5:13

This month we recognise Prisons Week and the theme is freedom or more specifically, 'are you free?' Working closely with offenders and Prison Chaplains, this is a question that is not as simple as it may appear.

What is freedom? There is freedom in the literal sense, being able to go where you want and do whatever you want to do. There is also freedom from fear, addiction, expectations and many other pressures in the world.

One example of a journey or quest to freedom is from my friend Tom. Tom was brought up in dire circumstances. In a house with three brothers, he witnessed



horrific abuse from an alcoholic step father, drug taking and learnt to be selfish from a young age. By the time he was 10, cigarettes and alcohol were a common part of his own life and by 15 he was known to the police for his participation in gang life and violence.

Stuck in this lifestyle Tom's goals became money, drugs, women and material gain.

The status he had among his friends was what he lived for. At the age of 17 he was first apprehended in a Young offenders unit for 4 and a half months, where he picked up skills and tactics to minimise the risk of getting caught again. This led to a life in and out of prison for the next ten years for a variety of crimes.

After the failure of one long term relationship and more relationship trouble in his following long term relationship he went abroad looking for some kind of freedom and peace from his life. This did not happen so he returned to the UK and this rocky relationship. At this time the nature of his thoughts began to concern him and he sought wisdom from a friend who offered to take him out for coffee.

MONTH YEAR

- 1 Pray for S who is in the waiting process of being rehoused
- 2 V, a foreign national who sadly died suddenly far from home. Please pray for his family at this sad time.
- 3 J whose dad has died unexpectedly and who blames himself because he is in prison.
- 4 Please pray for D that the new medication works and that the infection is finally cleared.
- 5 O, A, N, & I, who have been released recently that they may all find a spiritual home.
- 6 B and G who have been given much longer sentences than they were expecting.
- 7 H from a different culture & enjoying J10 course
- 8 J and D who are locked in a cycle of self destructive behaviour.
- 9 N, a young man struggling with relationships with his family. All struggling with family breakdown issues.
- 10 J who doesn't feel he has any reason to go on living.
- 11 T who is terminal with cancer that he will find the strength to carry on each day..
- 12 C who is growing stronger in his Faith that he may continue to mature in his walk.
- 13 C who is worried about his son because his mum has died. The son is also in prison.
- 14 D, is one of a large number in our prison struggling with bereavement. Please pray for all who experience the death of a loved one whilst in prison.
- 15 T who is desperate to get back to his open prison.
- 16 D who will be released soon that he will find a suitable church to attend.

MONTH YEAR

- 17 M who since attending chapel is no longer self-harming or suicidal, first time in 6 months pray for continued peace of mind.
- 18 D who is waiting to move to an open prison and very keen to move on with his sentence.
- 19 S who is addicted to drugs that God will help him find the strength he need to finally seek help and reconnect with family
- 20 T, is an older man finding it very difficult to cope with prison life. Please pray for all those in this situation.
- 21 S who recently said he wishes to become a disciple of Christ.
- 22 R who wants to engage more with faith because he wants to be a better man when he is released.
- 23 Pray for F that his hospital procedure goes as planned and that he receives the help he needs to resolve his living situation.
- 24 S, who is finding the violence of prison overwhelming. Please pray for all victims of violence.
- 25 L who is released in October and does not want to come back to prison.
- 26 Please pray for P a new client at GMCC who is struggling with housing and grief.
- 27 W who started attending & enjoying chapel voluntarily after Sycamore Tree course which was compulsory.
- 28 Please pray for R who is struggling with depression
- 29 A, for persistence in his journey with and to God.
- 30 P to find accommodation in a Christian rehab.
- 31 D who is struggling to get a job with his criminal record