

Honestly, he hardly mentioned Prison Fellowship, and that was because what was meaningful was that *Angel Tree* had given *him* the agency to provide for his family in a way he hadn't been able to in a long time.

There was something of God's joy in that conversation, even though he didn't talk of God. It was the sense of wholeness that had been given to him in that moment, the recognition that being part of *Angel Tree* had restored a little piece of him.

There are ongoing important conversations happening in the criminal justice sector about how we use prisons and who we imprison and for how long. As we wrestle with those issues, we need to hold on to the truth that we are all image-bearers of God. Our aim should be restoration, as often as is possible. Through God's love we are being made whole again, and we continue to believe in that for every prisoner we meet.

Points of praise:

C. came to see me for prayer and release from a curse. He was blessed and set free.

Custodial manager encourages a prisoner to read Life stories of transformed lives eg. Nicky Cruze

Prisoners and some staff raised over £1300 to give 2 families a marvellous Christmas thank you cards just arrived

GMCC hosts a weekly Prison Prayer Group on Thursdays at 1pm where we read the word and pray together. Please join us.

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

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GREATER MANCHESTER COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY

PRISON PRAYER LETTER MARCH 2020

Holding onto the truth

Peter Holloway, CEO Prison Fellowship England and Wales

Last month, I sat down for a conversation with a man serving a long prison sentence. He was the kind of man with a lot of presence. It was clear he used the gym, and you could tell that on the outside he was someone who would take care of everything, someone very much in control. He also had a deep sense of pride in being a father.

When he came to prison, all that was stripped away. That is part of the punishment of prison, a dimension that is often lost when tabloids start to talk about the "luxury" of prisons – that all the TVs in cells in the world cannot make up for the loss of liberty, that removal of the right to make your own decisions for yourself and the people you love.

I don't know what his crime was; I didn't ask, and he didn't tell. It wasn't important. He talked about the need to get settled in prison, to accept his sentence in order to survive it. There was this sense of the closing up of his life, a stripping away of so much of his identity.

As we started talking about our *Angel Tree* programme - which allows parents in prison to send their child a Christmas present - his face lit up and he spoke with real joy. And what he emphasised over and over again, was that *Angel Tree* had offered him something *he* could do for his family.



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- 1 A who has been suffering with depression, that he continues to find hope and joy in and with Christ.
- 2 S leads such a chaotic lifestyle it is difficult for him and those who attempt to help him, pray that he finds purpose and clarity.
- 3 P who recently lost his mother, that he doesn't revert into alcohol dependency as he goes through the grieving process
- 4 R suffering with wider family issues and the breakdown of family relationships that he has the opportunity
- 5 A and M who are out soon but always struggle on release from prison and have a lot of problems with drugs, that they will receive the support they need
- 6 D, who has recently left a long prison sentence and is adjusting to life beyond the institution, that he settles into a good rhythm
- 7 S upon release is going to be baptised, that his faith continues to grow
- 8 W whose mum has died, that he will have support and comfort during this difficult time
- 9 Lives being changed on the Living with Loss course as prisoners stuck in grief come to a new place of acceptance.
- 10 Message Academy training day in prison – please pray for a deeper understanding of what we do, as well as who we're working with, and pray that prison ministry would really strike a chord with someone there
- 11 M suffers with addictions and finds life very difficult., that he finds peace without the use of substances.
- 12 2 new volunteers at BH have received security clearance and plan to help run courses every week
- 13 New Sycamore Tree course starts in March with volunteers making a 1 hour 30m journey
- 14 C who has been waiting for a decision about his immigration status for a number of years and is very frustrated, that he will find ways to cope in this time of waiting
- 15 Please pray for all volunteers within the prison system, that they will know how worthwhile they are to the people they serve
- 16 L struggling with anxiety that he might know God's peace

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- 17 W who is serving as a mentor on our courses, that he has wisdom from God to help those he meets
- 18 J who has been told his dad is dying, that he can find comfort and peace in this difficult time
- 19 E who is on detox and dealing with bereavement issues, that he is given the strength he needs during this time
- 20 S who is becoming more confident in mixing with other people, that he continues to flourish
- 21 L and R who are waiting to go to hospital, that the process goes quickly and smoothly
- 22 John Williams is coming in to speak in the Sunday service. Pray for the lads to respond to what John brings, and also pray for them as it's Mothering Sunday which can bring up some tricky stuff for a lot of them
- 23 T just finds being in prison so challenging, that he finds a way to cope with the prison system and hope for future beyond prison
- 24 Pray for the staff and volunteers at GMCC as well as the professional we work with, that we are able to continue serving with love.
- 25 I who received a long sentence and is still coming to terms with it, that he will gain new perspective and utilise his time inside
- 26 J who's mother is ill, that she will recover well and he will be at peace in this time
- 27 D has been in the prison system a long time for renewal and fresh impetus in his life
- 28 For GMCC's new support group, that those who attend will find a safe place and have the opportunity to share and heal
- 29 All the men on IPP (Indeterminate Public Protection) which means they don't have a release date and many end up feeling frustrated and hopeless about their situation.
- 30 Chaplains in Manchester's prisons, that they receive the care for themselves that they share with others each day
- 31 J who has been sent to a prison far from his home and is hoping to move nearer to his family that he will have favour within the prison system