

About Us

Uniting Care Prison Ministry is a ministry of the Uniting Church in Australia. We are a state wide service focused on meeting the pastoral needs of those who are imprisoned or other wise effected by incarceration.

Our volunteer chaplains provide pastoral care for people in prisons, whilst our team on the outside provide ongoing support to people leaving prison and the families of those still on the inside.

Our support comes in many forms and from many people. Some partner with us through the donating finances, food and clothing, others donate there time and talents and many commit to pray for the ministry. Without this support we would not be able to help transform the lives of those imprisoned throughout the state.

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Please direct my gift to Prison Ministry

To give online please visit:

www.unitingcareqld.com.au/get-involved/support-us/donate-money

Donations over \$2 are tax deductible

Be Still, and know that I am God.

Psalm 46:10

All too often we find ourselves caught up in the hustle and bustle of life's ups and downs. We become completely consumed by the ways of the world and the need to provide a life that keeps us in line with others. In this business, time after time, we come to God out of duty, because we have favours to ask or things to get off our chests. We need to take time to rest in God's presence. Our Father longs for us to seek out his presence without agenda, he wants us to seek him because in his presence we find rest and contentment.

The story in this issue reminds me of the importance of making intentional space with our maker. It reminds me that, whilst there are times when I need to petition God, asking for him to provide, if all my interactions with him are of this nature I will gradually reduce my relationship with him to nothing more than a wish-list.

Pope Francis puts it like this:

"Prayer should be an experience of giving way, of surrendering, where our entire being enters into the presence of God. This is where dialogue, listening and transformation occur. Looking at God, but above all sensing that we are being watched by him." (Pope Francis, Untying the Knots p.144)

My hope for us all is that we might find space in the business if life to dwell deeply in the presence of the most high.

Yours in Christ,

Steven Fincham
State Coordinator Prison Ministry



Prison Ministry News

Stories from the inside

January 2019

A Sacred Space!



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"I was in prison and you came to visit me..."

Matthew 25:36

A Sacred Space!

I have no memory of the events that took me to prison, I had been on a alcoholic fuelled binge and I was completely intoxicated, that was normal for me. But as I sobered up on the inside, I did remember the things that took me to be in that place. My life has been a life of sadness, the loss of the people who loved me and the darkness and bitterness that came with that. I moved from foster family to foster family, I was lost in the system, everything and everywhere was a messed up and I thought it was normal.

I was 12 when I first slept rough, doing drugs and drinking were the only ways to forget what was happening to me, to forget that I was alone. I used to run with older boys they taught me to survive, how to run and not get caught, how to steal to eat to survive. After years of this life I used to think I did it for the fun of it but now I realise I was helplessly carrying out for something to change, to be loved and excepted. I would often think there must be more to life than this.

At 18 I was arrested and sentenced to my first stint inside, caught for stealing, I had drugs in my possession. This was when I entered the revolving door, in and out, in and out, in and out. The same crimes, the time, the same people. For twelve years I was trapped like this, spending more time inside than out.

But this last time something was different, my cellmate was a reader. I can read I just never liked it, he did. He read the same book every morning and every night. He read it when we were in lock down, he read it when ever he go a chance. After a few days an old guy came wondering into the unit with a see through bag and a heap of the book my cellmate was reading.

The Chaplain came up to me and said "I'm John, I don't think I've met you, how are you doing?"... he looked into my eyes and I knew there was something different about him.

Each week John came back in to the unit and he would spend time to listen to me, nobody ever listened to me. I told him how I was a bad man, that I had lived a bad life, that even if I wanted to change, I couldn't change the way that I lived, because I was on my own and had to survive. It was at this point, after weeks of my complaining about the world and how everything was a mess, about how my place was in that mess was because I was a mess, that John asked if he could tell me some of his story.

He told me of a loss, of sadness and forgiveness. He told me of a feeling of disruption and unrest. Then He told me what changed it, he told me about the book that my cellmate read and the man it was about. He asked if I wanted him to read some of it to me. It was Psalm 51, he told me about the presence of God being a place to rest and be restored, a place where I could start again. John gave me the bible and some daily reading book and said he'd check in on me next week.

My cellmate showed me where to start and what to read. He taught me that even in this place, confined behind bars, restricted in every way, we can still find rest in the Lord. I began to pray, to read the bible, I began to be restored. My bunk had become my sacred space, the messiness of life had begun to tidy up and I could understand what that difference was I saw in John's eyes that first day. The difference was Jesus.

The next time John came into the unit I had given my life to the Lord and I couldn't help but smile because

everything had changed.

From then on I went to church on Sunday's, I studied the bible, I talked with my brothers in Christ and I continued to open my heart to the spirit who was transforming me, making my mess clean.

Since being released I have moved to a new city, started working for the first time in my life and I love it, I'm studying and I've found a church that knows me and accepts me in my weakness and in my failings. Its been tough there's no doubting that, but I know for sure I ain't going back to that life because whenever I feel life's messiness taking over I look to Jesus and ask the Holy Spirit to make me new.

This inspiring story, full of God's grace and love was submitted to us from an anonymous former inmate who has been living his new life in Christ for the past six years, he is drug and alcohol free and is studying to work as a drug and alcohol councillor.

Getting in touch!

If you have been inspired by this story and want to get involved in Prison Ministry then please don't hesitate to get in touch with our team and we will help guide you through the opportunities we have available to you.

If you want someone to come and speak at your church, small group or event we would be excited to come and share our passion for this ministry with you!