



Chaplaincy and Faith Services and Prison Fellowship Press Release – Friday 31 July 2020

People in prison who want to be prayed for or who want to remotely join worship services will have the option of dialling in using two new phone services launched today. *Prayer Line* is run by Prison Fellowship and HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). *Daily Hope* is a free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers organised by the Church of England. These free services are paid for by the providers.

Prayer Line is a new service from Prison Fellowship and it allows anyone in prison to call a free number and leave a confidential message with their personal prayer request. Prison Fellowship's team of volunteers is committed to pray for each person that calls on that day and through the following month. It is as simple as that, and there are no catches!

"Some of the most fervent prayers are said from prison cells," says Ven. James Ridge, Chaplain General at HMPPS. "For over 40 years Prison Fellowship has enabled countless prisoners to know that someone is sharing in those prayers. This new initiative enables a more active and immediate participation – prisoners can know that their concerns are being shared safely and confidentially by faithful, prayerful Christians. This is a wonderful facility that will remind prisoners that they are loved by God and that His Church is praying with them and for them."

At this especially difficult time, Prison Fellowship is thrilled to have the backing of HMPPS Chaplaincy and Faith Services to support men and women in prison in this way. The launch of *Prayer Line* coincides with the introduction of the Church of England's *Daily Hope* phone service in prisons.

Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line. It was originally launched in April 2020, with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind. Now that phone line is being made available inside prisons too.

The expectation is that both these new offerings will strengthen the vital work of prison chaplains caring for the spiritual and pastoral needs of those in prison.

Peter Holloway, Prison Fellowship's CEO, says, "We know and expect that this lockdown has taken its toll on those inside, and we are ready and prepared to support men and women in their journey towards healing and restoration. *Prayer Line* is one key way we can do this, standing alongside them with deep trust that their loving Heavenly Father hears every prayer."

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Notes to Editors:

Prison Fellowship's mission is to show Christ's love to prisoners by coming alongside them and supporting them. We seek through prayer and practical care to help, support and develop a Christian ministry to prisoners and their families.

We do this through our network of volunteers, and have over 3,000 volunteers. We are currently involved with almost all of the nearly 120 prisons in England and Wales.

Prayer Line is a programme by Prison Fellowship – we also offer *Chaplaincy Support*, and run *Angel Tree*, *Sycamore Tree*, and *Letter Link*.

FAQs**1. Do people in prison have to pay to call *Prayer Line* or *Daily Hope*?**

No, it's free.

2. Can prison staff also call *Prayer Line*?

Yes, the service is for anyone in prison.

3. Will the calls ever be answered?

No. All calls will go straight to an answering machine (*Prayer Line*) or to the automated pre-recorded service (*Daily Hope*).

4. How often will the *Prayer Line* prayer requests be listened to?

Every day.

5. Who can call *Prayer Line* and *Daily Hope*?

They are for everyone - for people of any faith or none.

6. When will people who called *Prayer Line* be prayed for?

Prison Fellowship volunteers will pray for people on the day the message is received and then through the following month as well.

7. Is *Prayer Line* confidential?

Yes. Individuals are asked to only leave their first name and not the name of their prison. Only the initial of their name and no identifying information will be passed on for prayer, unless someone's life is in danger and they choose to identify themselves.

8. What about safeguarding concerns?

Prayer Line promotional material directs people with thoughts of suicide or self-harm to the Samaritans and provides the relevant telephone number. If, however, an individual should leave a concerning message with identification, the appropriate safeguarding actions will be taken.

PRISON FELLOWSHIP

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