

Prison
FELLOWSHIP

IN:SIGHT

WINTER 2024



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WE BELIEVE THAT NO ONE IS BEYOND HOPE, DO YOU?

Prison Fellowship's (PF's) mission is to show Christ's love to people in prison by coming alongside them and supporting them. We seek through prayer and practical care to help, support and develop a Christian ministry to restore people in prison, their families and their communities.




Our network of around 2,500 volunteers is delivering life-changing services to people in almost all of the 122 prisons across England and Wales.

Volunteers are connected through local groups. As well as supporting prisons in prayer, groups run PF's programmes *Sycamore Tree*, *Angel Tree*, *Letter Link*, *Prayer Line*, *Bible Studies*, *Chaplaincy Support and Pastoral Care*.

Together, we are restoring people's lives. No one is beyond hope.

PRISON FELLOWSHIP

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Photos of people in prison
and/or their families are models.

THE PRAISE-WORTHY DEEDS OF THE LORD



I was recently listening to someone talk about all the marvellous ways in which their charity was helping people in prison. As they spoke, I was struck by some of the similarities to Prison Fellowship's (PF's) work. But there were also elements that did not sound like a PF Volunteer speaking, and I could not immediately work out why.

And then it suddenly occurred to me: PF is distinctive in many ways. One of these is that our Volunteers are much more likely to talk about what God has done through PF, rather than to boast about what they have personally achieved.

Psalm 78 contrasts the wonderful blessings of God with our lack of gratefulness, our weaknesses and tendency to fall. In verse four, the writer says that we will tell the next generation of the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done. In each of the last 45 years in PF, we have been able to tell the same story of the praiseworthy deeds of God and pass on that history to the new generations of Volunteers who are joining us.

During the last year, we have seen the number of people in prison writing through

Letter Link reach record levels, the number of learners taking part in *Sycamore Tree* double, and a staggering 100 prisons wishing to use *Angel Tree* to provide presents to the children of parents in prison.

Our new *Bible Studies* and *Prayer Line* programmes continue to bless many, and we have been blessed further in being asked to start a new *Pastoral Care* work supporting Chaplains.

MY HEART IS FULL OF JOY WHEN I THINK OF ALL THAT GOD IS DOING THROUGH PF'S AMAZING VOLUNTEERS!

In the first chapter of John's Gospel, we read of how, when Andrew found Jesus,

the first thing he did was to find his brother Simon-Peter and bring him to Jesus. As the New Year begins, may I encourage you to prayerfully think about who you might tell of the praiseworthy deeds that God has done and be like Andrew and call others to join God's work?

John's Gospel goes on to describe how Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him about Jesus. But his initial reaction was to mock Philip and ask if anything good could come from Nazareth. Then, after only one moment with Jesus, Nathanael changed his mind!

As people whose mission it is to love those in prison in Christ's Name, we have the

extraordinary opportunity this year to be a channel of God's love to the adults and children who are in prison. But, having already seen for ourselves what God is doing there, we can declare His deeds and draw others to join this extraordinary mission. ■

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE THROUGH VOLUNTEERING AND FUNDRAISING, EMAIL [INFO@PRISONFELLOWSHIP.ORG.UK](mailto:info@prisonfellowship.org.uk).


Peter Holloway
Chief Executive 

ARE YOU UP FOR A CHALLENGE?

CALUM IS THE MANAGING CHAPLAIN AT A PRISON IN LANCASHIRE... AND A GLOBAL MARATHON FUNDRAISER FOR PRISON FELLOWSHIP ENGLAND AND WALES! RECENTLY, HE RAN THE CHICAGO MARATHON AND RAISED OVER £1,000 FOR OUR VITAL WORK. WE ASKED CALUM TO TELL US MORE...



I started running about nine years ago. I wanted a challenge and, working within a very closed environment, running was a good way to get some sunlight and fresh air. There are also mental and physical health benefits.

I signed up to my first marathon on a whim, and when I finally finished, I swore I would never do another one. But recently I completed my 19th!

My favourite marathon was London 2021—my best marathon time. It

was the busiest event I had attended since the pandemic. The atmosphere was amazing, and the weather was perfect.

The Paris marathon also stands out for the touristy sights that you get to see. It starts on the Champs Élysées—then past the Louvre, the Notre-Dame cathedral, the Eiffel Tower and finishing up towards the Arc de Triomphe.

Running abroad is a great way to see cities. You will see sites that are not on tourist maps and get to

experience the community spirit where locals have come out to support those participating. There are also local quirks to understand. For example, in the UK, spectators may give out sweets or fruit. In Paris, there were cakes and pastries on offer. In Chicago, I was offered a Bloody Mary cocktail!

However, running in your own city means that you have the comforts of home close at hand. When you are exhausted after the marathon, it is your own bed that you fall asleep in.

Relaxing afterwards doesn't feel like a waste of time that could be spent sightseeing.

I often joke that raising funds is harder than running the marathon as fundraising isn't something that comes naturally to me. However, my family, friends, colleagues and people in prison have been extremely generous over the years.

I TEND TO PUT QUITE A FEW POSTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA, AND THIS BRINGS IN MOST OF THE DONATIONS.

When I am feeling a bit cheeky, I will tag bishops and other leaders in posts, encouraging them to empty their pockets and show their support. When I was fundraising for Chicago this year, my Governor was very supportive, and I even managed to get donations from some very senior leadership in the prison service!

I have also been really touched by the strangers who have given money over the years. I have a particular memory of a PF supporter called Florence

who said she would have loved to run a marathon but didn't think she could, so she was sponsoring me to run it for her.

Prisons are quite secret places, hidden behind large walls and fences. But PF does so much to ensure that those in prison are not forgotten. The absolute jewel in the crown of PF are the Volunteers who give of their time and serve in a myriad of ways.

As a prison chaplain, my work would be harder without the PF Volunteers who come into prison to deliver *Sycamore Tree*, offer bereavement and other pastoral support, and run Bible studies. Then there are those who work outside the walls writing through *Letter Link* or buying and sending gifts through *Angel Tree*. Fundraising alongside running marathons is my way of saying that I don't take those Volunteers for granted.

Thank you for all that you do, and I hope the money raised for PF helps support even more amazing work. ■



COULD YOU RAISE MONEY TO SUPPORT OUR WORK IN PRISONS ACROSS ENGLAND AND WALES?

Even if you are not a marathon runner, could you take part in a sponsored cycle or swim? What about a coffee morning or church lunch fundraiser? Help fund our vital work bringing hope, connection and restoration to people in prison.

If you have a bright idea to share or would like more information, visit prisonfellowship.org.uk/get-involved/fundraise or email info@prisonfellowship.org.uk.

REKNITTING FAMILY TIES

MOTHER'S DAY: SUNDAY, 10/3/24



Our Maker formed us inside our mother's womb. And, whether our relationships with parents or carers are rocky, refreshing or something in between, it seems that God intended for us to have a connection with those who raised us.

For many young adults, maternal relationships are so strained that maintaining family ties can be difficult or even impossible. And prison can often become a barrier separating young people from their families and friends.

This year will be our thirteenth opportunity to roll out *Angel Tree Mother's Day*, restoring and strengthening relationships between young adults in prison and their mothers or significant female carers. The programme gives young people in prison the

chance to send a Mother's Day gift and personalised message, to reach out and show gratitude to their mums and carers.

Last year, we were able to send 788 *Angel Tree Mother's Day* cards on behalf of young adults from 26 different prisons in England and Wales. And this year, we are aiming to send even more!

The latest issue of *Bromley Briefings* from Prison Reform Trust highlights that there are currently 11,464 young adults in prison in England and Wales, accounting for 14% of the total prison population. These figures evidence the high number of young people who have been separated from their family by prison sentences.

Mental health concerns are also rising among young adults. Research suggests that young people accounted for almost a quarter (23%) of all self-harm incidents in prison in 2021. Prisons are unfamiliar places and those inside can often feel neglected and forgotten. Family connections can

be a key factor in the rehabilitation of those in prison and, as the *Bromley Briefings* suggest, can help to enable successful resettlement upon release.

**FOR YOU CREATED
MY INMOST BEING;
YOU KNIT ME
TOGETHER IN MY
MOTHER'S WOMB.**

PSALM 139:13

Our Programmes Co-ordinator, Tim Spargo-Mabbs, shares, '*Angel Tree Mother's Day* comes almost straight after the busyness that is *Angel Tree Christmas*. It feels calmer somehow and just as special. Here, young people are expressing their thanks for the love and attention they have received from their parents/carers. It felt like the corollary of *Angel Tree Christmas*. This is how the love circulates between generations in a beautiful spiral dance.

'It made me think of how much I owe my own mother and father, now sadly beyond my reach

to tell. But it made me also determined to pay it forward instead, to my son, and to make the most of our relationship now that he is an independent adult.'

Angel Tree Mother's Day can help to strengthen the family ties that have often become unravelled because of prison. To some, a Mother's Day card can be the catalyst in repairing these broken relationships and to help young people in making more significant changes in their lives, away from crime. ■



**HELP RECONCILE A
YOUNG PERSON IN
PRISON WITH THEIR
SIGNIFICANT ADULT
THIS MOTHER'S DAY**

To get involved, visit
**[prisonfellowship.org.uk/
our-work/mothersday](https://prisonfellowship.org.uk/our-work/mothersday)**



FOLLOWING GOD'S CALL

If you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans,' smiles Terry Brown.

He is reminiscing on almost 20 years of involvement with Prison Fellowship. But, had Terry not followed God's call, things could have been very different.

Terry explains, 'Back in 1984, I was in my church's Sunday service. I remember saying to the Lord, "I will do anything for you, providing I don't have to do anything with criminals." I was serious! But, I didn't think any more of it. I was expressing, "Lord, I want to serve you. But please don't ask me to serve you with these people."

'Then, some 15 years later, I asked, "Lord, what would you have me do now?" And someone gave me Isaiah 61:

'The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.

'The word "prisoner" jumped out at me, and I thought, "I wonder what it's like to work in a prison?"

'Later that year, I was invited to speak at a church in Germany. Nuns had donated their

convent to be used to aid the homeless community and the church leader had invited me to speak there.

'On our first evening together we ate a meal, and I was asked to lead a devotion. After I had spoken, the leader introduced me to the 15 or so residents of the convent. First up was Sophia, a sex worker from Frankfurt who had been removed from an exploitative situation only four days before I arrived. Next was Felix, a young, male sex worker with a disability. One by one, they all introduced themselves. People struggling with substance abuse, involved in involuntary sex work or exploited by others.

'And then, it suddenly dawned on me. Without exception, all the people I'd said to the Lord I didn't want to work with were here sat in front of me. I got to bed that night and I muttered, "Lord, you haven't listened to a word I said." And I felt the Lord

reply, "I did listen, but I chose to ignore it."

'In 2004, while convalescing from cancer, I met someone from church who was volunteering in a prison. I asked, "What do you do in there?" He said, "Come and see." So, he took me to HMP Springhill to sit in on a *Sycamore Tree* course as an observer. I looked at everybody in the room.

'I THOUGHT I HAD WORKED OUT WHO WERE THE LEARNERS AND WHO WERE THE PRISON FELLOWSHIP VOLUNTEERS— AND I GOT IT ALL WRONG! I WAS OVERWHELMED BY IT. THE PRISON DIDN'T FRIGHTEN ME, NOR DID THE RESIDENTS.

'At the end of the session, the Tutor enquired if I would be interested in becoming a Group Facilitator. Following

training, I did this for three courses and was then invited to become a Tutor. I was asked if I had a teaching qualification— I said, "I left school at 16. Certainly not." So, I went to college and obtained one! And now I've been tutoring *Sycamore Tree* for 18 years.'

Terry was also a Prison Fellowship employee for seven years. Throughout his time working and volunteering, he has visited an incredible 78 prisons in England and Wales. He confides, 'My years with PF have been the best time of my life. I have been doing what I didn't want to do! But, by following what God called me to do, He has sent me on the most wonderful adventure. I have loved every minute of it. While I'm still breathing and God still wants me in prison, that's fine by me.' ■





YOUR LEGACY

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARDS

TIME IS A BBC DRAMA PORTRAYING THE REALITY OF PRISON FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF THOSE BEHIND BARS.

The first season engrossed us as we saw the difficulties between a resident (Sean Bean) and a prison officer (Stephen Graham) play out within a fictitious male prison. In Season 2, we ride an emotional rollercoaster as we encounter the stories of a handful of women in a female prison.

We are introduced to Orla (Jodie Whitaker), mum of three, whose crime is an act of desperation to provide for her children. We witness the painful journey her children must endure when they are

thrust into the care system, separated from each other and detached from the life they are familiar with.

We also meet Kelsey (Bella Ramsay), a young addict in an abusive relationship, and Abi (Tamara Lawrance), who is serving a life sentence for murder. Three women whose lives intertwine with one common factor—they are all victims entangled within the criminal justice system.

THE DRAMA DEPICTS THE DIFFICULTIES WOMEN FACE IN PRISON, BRINGING ATTENTION TO THE NEED FOR SANITARY PRODUCTS, THE STRUGGLE OF BEING SEPARATED FROM ONE'S OWN CHILDREN AND THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT.

We also see a section of the prison for mums with young babies, portraying the significance of maternal bonds in helping women turn their lives around and highlighting the maternal role as being a key deterrent from crime.

Chaplaincy also plays a central role in Season 2. We see the significance of pastoral care as the Chaplain (Siobhan Finneran) offers consolation and a safe space for the women to share their stories.

Women make up a small percentage of the prison population, so it is refreshing to see their unique needs televised. *Time* portrays the journeys of women struggling through a system of hopelessness, but who find hope in community. ■

Catch Season 2 of *Time* on BBC iPlayer.

Do you have a favourite Prison Fellowship (PF) memory? A prayer you prayed, a letter you wrote, a story you heard or a gift you wrapped? The path PF has forged is lined with memories of volunteers, supporters and people who are, or have been, in prison.

PF has followed God's call to show Christ's love to those in prison by coming alongside them and supporting them. Our work has been consistent, steadfast, responsive, sensitive and compassionate.

But what about the future?

In a forever changing social and economic landscape, we continue to be aware of the scale of need in our prisons. There are no quick fixes. And so PF is committed to bringing God's light and hope for the long haul. We will continue to go the distance to build upon hope where it exists and help recover it when it has been lost.

By leaving a gift in your Will, you will continue to walk alongside those most disregarded by society—believing no one is beyond hope.

Practically, gifts in Wills play a vital part in PF's services to the prison community. We want to ensure we can continue to sustain and develop a Christian ministry that supports people in prison and their families for many years to come.

After taking care of your loved ones, a gift in your Will to PF, no matter the size, enables us to continue building upon the work God is already actively doing. The only decision you have to make is the type of gift you would like to leave: any sum of money or any percentage of the total assets you leave behind—which can be 1% to 100% or anywhere in between depending on your circumstances.

Whether you currently support PF through prayer,

volunteering or your financial support, your faithfulness to engage with people in prison is creating ripples of love, planting seeds of hope and ensuring that no one is forgotten.

We don't know what the future holds. But, with your help, we will continue to support those most disregarded by society. ■

LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL IS SIMPLE... PLEASE INSTRUCT YOUR WILL WRITER OF:

- your chosen gift
- our Registered Charity Number, **1102254**
- our full charity name, **Prison Fellowship England and Wales**

For more information, visit prisonfellowship.org.uk/legacy or email our Fundraising Officer: johenderson@prisonfellowship.org.uk.

In loving memory...

IT IS WITH GREAT SADNESS
THAT WE INFORM YOU OF THE
DEATH OF DR STEVE RAWLINS.

*MY FLESH AND MY HEART
MAY FAIL, BUT GOD IS THE
STRENGTH OF MY HEART
AND MY PORTION FOREVER.*

PSALM 73:26



DR STEVE RAWLINS






Steve served on Prison Fellowship's Board of Trustees from 2019 until his passing, but he helped deliver our mission to those in prison in many other ways. He was a humble blessing to all those he encountered, bringing the love and joy of a life transformed by Christ to everything he did.

As the founder and director of the charity Way4ward, Steve never lost touch with the grass roots. With his broad expertise, lived experience of the criminal justice system and academic qualifications, Steve made a significant difference in the lives of vulnerable young people and their communities, helping many to stay away from crime and to go on and lead a fulfilled and renewed life.

Please pray for Steve's family and friends. We will miss him greatly. ■

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