

"RESPAIR" is an Old English word which fell out of use many centuries ago but means "the return of hope after a period of despair". The prayer tradition of lament helps us to make that journey from a dark place of pain, suffering, fear or sorrow to somewhere that the light can get in. Maybe only through a tiny crack to begin with but bringing a gradual dawning of hope and sense of God's promise, that we are loved and will never be abandoned or alone. No matter how messy and difficult life becomes, God is never distant and longs for us to let him in.

Please pray with us each day during Prisons Week, these prayers offered by chaplains, serving prisoners, police officers, victims of crime, prison leavers, family members and communities – crying out to God, asking for help, responding in faith, giving thanks for his unending love, grace and mercy.

Let us walk together through the week in prayer and grow in our understanding of the value God places on each one of his children, so that like the ravens we may soar, free at last, trusting in the knowledge of his provision and love for us.

THE PRISONS WEEK PRAYER

Lord, you offer freedom to all people. We pray for those in prison. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist. Support with your love prisoners and their families and friends, prison staff and all who care. Heal those who have been wounded by the actions of others, especially the victims of crime. Help us to forgive one another, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together with Christ in his strength and in his Spirit, now and every day. Amen

GRIEF

DAY
1

My God, my God why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? Psalm 22:1

They don't see me Lord, but you do. They do not hear me, but you do. My mental health is waning, my despair increasing, I feel like no-one cares, but you do. I hold onto your every word of the Bible, as they renew my mind. I praise you Lord! Have mercy on my soul! Grant me favour with the officers, with the courts and with probation. Bless my family members and keep them safe, until we meet again. God, you are wonderful! Thank you for those who visit me when I am lonely.

GETTING HELP

DAY
2

The King will reply 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'. Matthew 25:40

Father God, thank you for the work of all Prison Chaplains. During this past year many have gone well beyond what had been expected of them. Sustain and strengthen them, bless their families and may they be encouraged in their service to you. In the name of Jesus our saviour.

ACCEPTANCE

DAY
3

All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Ephesians 2:3

Every day I pray for the strength to continue to live through this pain, the pain of separation from my beloved, the strength to hold my children safe as they struggle to comprehend what has happened to us. I pray for the signs to guide our family through this experience with love and compassion, so that we all grow and flourish with the wisdom that is part of the Divine plan that holds us all safe. I pray that I will understand how to use this experience for good and transform the pain to joy in the future, I pray to let go of distress and find acceptance in the peace that miracles will replace all grievances, for therein lies the peace of God.

10TH–16TH OCT 2021

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 **PRISONSWEEK**
A WEEK OF PRAYER

DAY 4

LETTING GO

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Hebrews 12:1

I was down and thinking of behaviours before I decided to let go, let God heal and restore. I'd done drugs, sex and violence in the past to cope. But they all left me empty, and no feeling of hope. When I read through the scripture, something happens in me - I want to do good things and be with God's family. You can't change the past, but the future you can. If you're looking for hope, then God has a plan.

DAY 5

LETTING GOD

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. Ezekiel 36:25

Heavenly Father, I lift all those in prison today, no life is beyond your reach. Come to those who don't know you and cause them to start seeking you. Thank you for those who do know you, in whom your heart resides; as they go through this day and cross paths with others, cause them to stop and listen, and show your great love to those they encounter. May we all make time for the lost and hurting today.

DAY 6

HOPE

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11

Dear God, I hear your kind words of comfort and reassurance that you want me to prosper and not be harmed. Help me not to worry about my life, but to put my trust in you, to be happy and full of hope, love and gratitude.

DAY 7

PROMISE

Consider the ravens: they do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Luke 12:24

We find peace in a broken place. God's grace can give you new strength. My wounds you heal. Lord Jesus, how great you are! They control the locks, you Lord control the clocks. Time will pass and we will be free.

Trust the past to the mercy of God, the present to his love, the future to his providence.

St Augustine of Hippo 354 – 430 AD



For over forty years Prisons Week has prepared prayer literature for the Christian community to use as they pray for the needs of all those affected by prisons: prisoners and victims, their families, their communities, those working and volunteering in prisons and the criminal justice system. Please pray each day during Prisons Week but also ask yourself whether there is one thing that you as an individual, or as a church, can do to help any of the people that you are praying for.

For more information, to make a donation or to order more of these prayer leaflets please visit our website at www.prisonweek.org email us via info@prisonweek.org or write to: Prisons Week, c/o Free Churches Group, 27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH



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