**Prison Ministries Focus** taken from [**Prayer Matters**](https://www.salvationist.org.uk/resources/discipleship/prayer-matters)October 2023 – January 2024

**Written by Major Rik Pears (Prison Ministries Officer)**

Almost from its very foundation, The Salvation Army has been involved in prison ministry. This ministry continues today with a strong chaplaincy team made of volunteers, lay Salvationists and officers working in 22 prisons in the UK. These are demanding and challenging ministries that are highly valued and respected by His Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service. This week we share in Prisons Week which for more than 40 years has sought to gather the Church in prayer for the needs of all those affected by prisons: prisoners and their families, victims of crime and their communities, those working in the criminal justice system and the many people caring for those affected by crime inside and outside of our prisons.

**Sunday 8 October**

William Booth is reputed to have spoken the words: ‘While women weep, as they do now, I’ll fight … While men go to prison, in and out, in and out, as they do now I’ll fight …’ Prison sentences are proven to have a huge cost on families and their very existence, especially for partners and children. Pray earnestly for prisoners and their families.

**Monday 9October**

Pray for prison staff and their families, many of whom work in Britain’s toughest and most dangerous prisons. Like so many settings, our jails are understaffed and underfunded. Prisons are challenging and difficult places to work in, but staffed by men and women committed to their task.

**Tuesday 10 October**

CAMEO groups (Come and meet each other) are in operation in three of our prisons. These gatherings are especially significant for the older, most vulnerable and at-risk prisoners. Pray for these groups today and their leaders. May they be safe spaces within prison where people can meet and enjoy some time of fellowship and the opportunity to be stimulated by quizzes, games and conversation.

**Wednesday 11October**

Pray for prison chaplains. Their days are often stressful and at times dangerous, with responsibilities that range from the highest category of security down to open prisons. Pray for their work with young offenders, women, men and older vulnerable prisoners. Pray also for the many prison charities who work week in week out in the nation’s jails.

**Thursday 12 October**

Pray for prisoners – men, women, young and old – who have come to faith, often through the devoted and caring ministry of prison chaplaincy teams. Pray that through the prayer and Bible study groups they will grow strong in their faith. Pray also for a welcoming church family on their release.

**Friday 13 October**

‘You cannot warm the hearts of people with God’s love if they have an empty stomach and cold feet’ (William Booth).Pray today for the many prisoners who, after serving their sentence, on release find that they have no safe and welcoming accommodation to go to, no new place to call home. Pray for those who help them to live new, productive and fulfilling lives without the need to re-offend. Pray that we will all be moved by God’s love and be welcoming whenever an ex-offender comes into our church.