



In2Out Prayer Update – September 2023

Recently one of our team overheard a Prison Officer telling a young person that was acting up, 'Act your age!' It was an angry rebuke, spoken in frustration no doubt, and may well have been justified, but it raises the question, what does age have to do with it? Maybe in society at large there is an expectation that someone approaching their 18th birthday is on the cusp of being an adult. They should have matured significantly since they were, say 10 or 12 years old. But what happens when there has been little love and nurture? Where feeling safe has been a very scarce commodity? Where role models have been few and far between? Where the people who have been around, have been themselves often unreliable, chaotic and even abusive?

The thing is age and maturity aren't like our physical body. The body surely needs some level of care and feeding but will generally just grow as our genes dictate. So, a well adjusted 17 year old looks much like one who has grown up in chaos. Just like a foot forced to endure a shoe many sizes too small, starved of space, will be extremely painful and become stunted, so the minds and spirits of many of our young people are equally starved and stunted. If you haven't been taught and then modelled right and wrong, how do you make sense of the world, your part in it and the role of others? If fight or flight have become your survival mechanism, how do you slow down to reflect and maybe take a different path? The answer is, with a lot of struggle, with

quite a lot of time, and essentially with patient encouragement, and modelling and support. Time alone doesn't bring maturity. Learning from mistakes in a safe environment, amongst positive relationships where people believe in you, does.



The Bible is littered with people, many heroes of faith, who 'acted up' big time at different stages of life. They lied and cheated, were full of pride, ran from their responsibilities, stole, even raped and murdered. Think of Joseph, Gideon, David or Moses. Yet, God didn't give up on them. He kept pursuing them, teaching and encouraging them along the path of maturity, and ultimately used them in mighty ways. Thank God, that with God there is always hope, whatever age or path we've been on up to this point.

Praise God for...

Devin - who was very anxious approaching release about his accommodation arrangements but, just before he got out, he was told he would be living close to his mum, which he was so relieved about. Pray that he would put his good intentions and resettlement plan into action now that he's 'on the out'.

Sonny - who has been exploring training opportunities. Give thanks that he has been accepted on his chosen college course and please pray that this goes well.

Pray with us for...

Rhys - who has just been released to a new place under very strict licensing conditions. Please pray that he will settle well and engage with the activities and support provided for him there.

Justin - who is 'on the out' but his behaviour means that he is in danger of being recalled to prison. Please pray that a recent meeting about this will serve as a wake-up call, and that he would refocus on the landscaping work that he has secured.

Bella - who is back in custody on a different wing where she doesn't know anyone. She is self-harming and had been refusing to come out of her room. Please pray that she will build good relationships with the staff who do an amazing job working with such vulnerable young people.

Idris - who has been on remand a long time as his case went back for re-trial, which is now coming to an end. He has struggled with the uncertainty so, as a sentence is passed down, please pray for peace for him, that he will deal with the outcome and move on emotionally.

Ruby - who faced last minute changes of plan as she was released. She's ended up in unfurnished accommodation in an area she was hoping to avoid. Please pray that she will get the furniture and items she needs and will be prepared to make a go of it, despite it not being what she hoped for.

Isaac - who needs some medical assessments to be done quickly and for the results to be taken into consideration as decisions are made about his future. Please pray for protection as he tries to navigate some relationships.

Finley - who is continuing to explore housing options. Please pray that he will set some realistic expectations of what is available and engage well with the support services.

Kev - who finds himself back in custody where, we pray, he will get much needed support for his mental and physical health. Please pray that he can get a job inside to pass the time and fund his canteen.

Jordy - who we have had to withdraw mentoring support from due to a too high level of risk, although we continue to advocate and coordinate with other professionals on his behalf. Please pray that Adult Social Services will fully engage with his case and work to meet his needs.

Cody - who is exploring employment opportunities. Please pray that he would find something suitable and that it would give his confidence a real boost.

Thank you for praying with us!

With gratitude, the In2Out team.