



# PRAISES AND WORSHIP FROM PRISON



Program from IPCA Africa

Pictures: Rose Bezuidenhout



## 1. Words from the Bible: Gods Presence in Prison

Isaiah 42:7: To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

Deuteronomy 30: 3: That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.

Genesis 39: 21-23: 21. But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

22. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.

23. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.

2 Kings 25: 29: And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life.

Ecclesiastes 4: 14: For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor.

Matthew 25: 39: Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

Matthew 25: 43: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Luke 22: 33: And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

Acts 12: 5: Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

Acts 12: 7: And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

2. Some written prayers:

- a. Oh Lord, you came down to set free the captives, as we pray for the inmates, we ask you Lord to set them free from the spiritual prison and then, from the physical prison.
- b. Lord, we pray for the ex-offenders that, you may unite them with their families and the society, unite them that they will be productive in the community for their sake and the sake of the community.
- c. Lord, the prison is a place of sufferance and torment, but we pray Lord, to set free those who hope and trust on you in Jesus Name.
- d. Lord, we pray that every chaplain, in each corner of the world, will believe that every time they have an opportunity to visit a prisoner, they are visiting you, their Lord.
- e. Lord, we pray for the chaplains who are doing their ministry to the prisoners in very difficult conditions, that you strengthen them, you empower them and give them the perseverance, hoping and knowing that you are their answer.
- f. Lord, we pray for the prisons where there are no medical facilities, that you will provide medical facilities for the inmates and those working with them in Jesus Name.
- g. Lord, we are praying for the budget of IPCA VI, we ask you to provide all necessities for the success of this gathering of your children and servants working in prison ministry.

3. Testimonies from chaplains and inmates:

- a. A prisoner witness on how he found Jesus Christ in prison. He was forgiven and set free from all the bad things he had done. Jesus Christ has done for me what not even my mother could have done for me!
- b. Words from a 'lifer' on death row: "All my plans all my life were to commit crimes. Being arrested has brought blessings into my life. I have received a wonderful thing in this prison - Jesus Christ. I am convinced that this is true" - and he quoted from II Timothy Chapter 2 verse 9: I am imprisoned for the rest of my life but the Word of God is not imprisoned. I meet with all the forgiven, saved, and 'born again' people regularly. You are visitors - such visitors are like cold water to me - to refresh me.
- c. Another 'lifer' spoke - I was a sinner - I could not talk like this in front of 200 men - not before I was arrested and came to Jesus Christ. I pray - I know that the Bible says in Romans chapter 10 verse 9 that "if you confess with you mind that Jesus is Lord you will be saved! " And I read in Psalm 23 - that "when I will pass through the valley one day GOD will be with me." Some of my former friends would not like to see me standing here testifying to Jesus Christ. He has washed me and has forgiven me.
- d. A number spoke - I was chased from my home because of my crime - I was a sinner - I killed people - and took drugs. Jesus Christ has saved me and rescued me. Jesus Christ has given me eternal life. (Officers and guards were present with guns.)
- e. A man sentenced to death arose - I am 'happy' in the prison here - because I heard The Word of God here. My dad tried to kill me. I then went and killed. God opened my ears and my heart. He then quoted from Psalm 119 verses 67 and 71.
- f. The prisoners of Goma Central prison in DR Congo bless the Lord for the gift of the sewing machines that Just Equipping offered for the training of trade in this center of rehabilitation.
- g. The prisoners of Togo are thankful to God for the miracles which happen in their lives while in prison.

- h. The prisoners of Nigeria glorify the Lord for what He does in their lives.
- i. The prisoners of Togo thank the Lord for their incarceration, because this made possible their meeting with the Lord and to receive Him in their lives as Lord and Saviour.
- j. An inmate from South Africa witnesses: “I thought I was a hero amongst my gang members when we robbed people and raped young girls. But the day I met Jesus Christ in prison, I actual found out that I was a fool. God opened my eyes and gave me His forgiveness. I am so ashamed of what I did. Every day I pray to God to change me more and more to be like Him”.

4. Some examples of how the ministry in prison is done:

- a. The prison ministry is concerned with proclaiming Gods presence, love and salvation to prisoners, their families and victims of crime. The ministry includes:
    - The caring for offenders, their families and victims of crime;
    - Teaching and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ;
    - Prayer meetings and Bible study groups;
    - Pastoral counselling to inmates and victims of crime;
    - Assisting with the restoring of relationships;
    - Healing the wounds of crime;
    - Helping inmates to change their criminal behaviour; and
    - Support offenders with their reintegration back into society.
  - b. Chaplains and spiritual workers of different churches and denominations work together with their congregations in the caring and supporting of inmates and their families.
  - c. Religious literature and Bibles are distributed in the prisons and correctional centres.
5. Prayer requests:
- a. For the change of the conditions of incarceration in prison in some countries around the world.
  - b. For the total abolition of the death raw.
  - c. For the application of Restorative Justice in all the country of the world.
  - d. For the success of IPCA VI.

## PRAYERS AND PRAISES IN PRISON

Day of Prayer, Praises and Worship.

- To pray for breakthroughs and God's intervention concerning the giant of crime, corruption and violence endangering the universe and more specific the ministering in prisons.
- To bring praises to God.

Proclaiming God's glory:

The God, the Creator of all things, the Source of all steadfastness and encouragement, compassionate and merciful [Gen 1:1];

The Provider God [Gen 22:14];

The Healer God [Ex 15:26];

The Lord of peace and rest [Ps 35:27];

The Lord of the whole world and universe [Mic 4:13];

Jesus Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life [John 6:14];

Jesus the Wisdom and Power of God [1 Cor 1:24];

The Lamb of God in the centre of the throne [Rev 7:17];

The Lamb that was slain for our salvation [Rev 5:21];

The Hope of Glory [Col 1:26];

The Spirit of Liberty, Insight, Counsel and Strength [Is 11:2];

The Spirit of Knowledge and fear of the Lord,

Grace and Supplication [1 Peter 4:14];

Holiness, Love, Truth, Power, Wisdom and Revelation of the Knowledge of Him, the Spirit of Glory [1 Peter 4:14].

Power of Prayer and Praises:

Pray through the following Scriptures about the power of prayers and praises in prison:

Acts 16:25, 26: "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose."

Revelation 8:4, 5: "The smoke of the incense together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, fill it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake...."

James 5:8: "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

Dedication: Seeking the will of God:

Ask the Lord to make you sensitive for Gods will and purpose for your life.

Ask God to reveal His will and strategies/plans to you.

Take a few moments reflecting on your life? Are within the will and purpose of God for your life? Are you happy with what you are doing at this moment in your life?

Write down those things that you are unhappy with and you can possibly change it.

Share with a person how you do you see Gods purpose for your life. Pray together and ask God to make you dedicated in your personal spiritual life.

Praise and worship:

- Thank God for his goodness and take time to bless someone.
- Calling on the Name of the Lord.
- Seeking God's Glory through His intervention and breakthroughs in the challenges of certain crime, corruption and violence.
- Seeking God's glory in the increasing involvement of chaplains and religious workers in the spiritual ministering to inmates, victims of crime, societies, correctional staff, families of inmates and the updating of the restorative justice policies.
- Praise and thanksgiving - 1 Cor 1:4

Reflecting: Seeking God's glory through personal holiness of chaplains:

- Is there any unconfessed sin my life?
- Do I harbor unforgiveness and bitterness in my life?
- Are there any doubtful practices or activities in my life?
- Am I obeying the Holy Spirit promptly in all things?
- Am I confessing Jesus unashamedly?

Pray the Word in times of fear, worry and helplessness:

- Ps 4:8, "I can lie down and sleep soundly because you, Lord, will keep me safe."
- Ps 20:8, "Others will stumble and fall, but we will be strong and stand firm."
- Ps 42:11, "Why am I discouraged? Why am I restless? I trust you! And I will praise you again because you help me, and you are my God."
- Ps 50:15, "Pray to me in time of trouble. I will rescue you, and you will honor me."
- Luke 12:6, 7, "Five sparrows are sold for just two pennies, but God doesn't forget a single one of them. Even the hairs on your head are counted. So don't be afraid! You are worth much more than many sparrows."
- Luke 12:25, 26, "Can worry make you live longer? If you don't have power over small things, why worry about everything else?"
- John 14:1, "Jesus said to His disciples, "Don't be worried! Have faith in God and have faith in me."
- John 14:27, "I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It isn't like the peace that this world can give. So don't be worried or afraid."

Prayer of chaplains:

Make me aware O Lord of the eye that beholds me, the hand that holds me, the heart that loves me; the presence that enfolds me that I may seek to do your work.

As a Christian chaplain I am dedicated to work for restoring justice and peace. Peace is born of Love; love is born of understanding; understanding is born of listening.

Pray for:

Victims - those living with the physical, emotional, financial or spiritual harm caused to them by the crimes of others; for relief from their burdens of fear, anger and guilt; that they might find the strength, support and healing they need: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Offenders – those in prison for the first time and those made hard by prison life; for the weak who are abused by the strong and those who desperately long to be accepted; for the unloved and the unwanted who receive neither letter nor visit; that they may find strength, support and the healing they need: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Christian Communities – those whose thoughts turn into prayer and whose prayer turns into action: Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

For those who show forth the gifts of the Spirit in love, joy and peace; for those who are patient, good, gentle, self-controlled and faithful: Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

For those whose love bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things; for those whose love never ends. Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Governments, legislators, criminal justice personnel, correctional staff, chaplains and volunteers – those who make laws, judge the actions of others, who need wisdom in the application of justice and understanding of those in their care; Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who through word and deed bring true humanity to relationships and show compassion to others in their need. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Families – for all family members who share the destructive experience of victimization by criminal behavior, by the criminal justice system, by the media and by hurtful social expectations: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who have family members in prison and feel the pain of separation, the stigma of being related to an offender and the strain of keeping going from day to day: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Communities – for those contemplating crime at this time and for those who may be harmed by them; for those that are able to prevent crime and build safer communities; for those who support victims and enable safe reintegration of offenders; for all who bless and are blessed by being peacemakers; for all who watch and care for “the least of these my children” [Matthew 25]: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Repairing Harm: Restoring Hope – there are both concrete steps to be taken and spiritual concerns to be taken and spiritual concerns to be addressed when restorative justice principles are called into play. The danger of focusing on one at the expense of the other presents an ongoing challenge for Christians as they attempt to repair harm done and to bring a message of hope.

Let us pray,

Dear Jesus, Risen Christ, You in whom we live and move and have our being [Acts 17:28].

We come to you with all those made afraid and hurt by crime, not only individuals but communities like us as well.

We come with our brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, who act out in ways that offend, destroy and cause harm to others.

We bring to you all those who are responsible in any way for our justice system.

You cared deeply about what was right and just, You wept and expressed deep feelings when you saw people being hurt and you reached out to comfort and heal.

Open our hearts and minds and help us find ways that ultimately heal as you healed in our dealings with those who are hurt as well as with those who cause harm.

By sharing our hurt and pain and fears we call each other to assume responsibility for our words and deeds.

We know that healing comes when we feel safe enough to humbly acknowledge our faults, when we accept and do not judge.

Make us long to grow in spiritual maturity and desire to represent You, Jesus Christ well.

We yearn to learn together how to deal with conflict in ways that create a justice that heals.

You who give us courage, strength and peace. We pray in your Name.

Amen.