

**Blackfriars Partnership – ‘Being the Prodigal Child’
Thursday 7 March 2019**

Blackfriars Spirituality Group asked **Opengate**, a charity who works with women from Low Newton Prison during and after release, to come up with an event for Blackfriars Partnership to be held at St. Robert’s on Thursday 7 March.

The event was an evening of reflection around Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son experienced by women serving custodial sentences. As well as a liturgy, we listened to the voices of these women telling us how it felt being that prodigal child, from their point of view and from their families. This was interspersed with group discussions facilitated by Opengate team around what they'd heard.



The event turned out to be a success and provided a safe environment for everyone to discuss how we as Christians need to be more welcoming and forgiving of ex-offenders and to be able to reflect on our own spiritual journey. Feedback received from the people at the event was positive and here are just a few of the comments:

"Thought provoking, humbling, made the parable come alive."

"We should answer the call of the parable, be less judgemental, be more forgiving, be kind and caring and look through others eyes."

"Forgiveness is love, we can all share it, as a Christian we can show forgiveness to people of all faith or none. 'Our Father' says it all."

"Accept and welcome people from all walks of life who are broken, in need of love and healing. From this evening, we are being more understanding not judging."



Opengate are providing a pack that can be used at other Partnerships. If this interests, you please contact Ronnie Rowbotham at opengate@btconnect.com.

Article submitted by Susan Picola