



GOLDEN KEY
PRISON MINISTRY

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Serving: Broome, Chemung, Tioga & Tompkins County
Jails and Elmira & Southport Correctional Facilities

“Annual Volunteer Banquet in Elmira”

Most years **Elmira Correctional Facility** has hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Banquet to thank the many individuals that give of their time and resources to benefit the inmates, their families and the facility staff. Besides supplying Bible study and worship service ministry, volunteers serve the visiting families at the hospitality house, and provide addiction, educational, and service opportunities for the inmates.

This year’s banquet, held on Wednesday June 29 at the Elmira Staff Clubhouse, was a “bitter-sweet” event as one of the DOC staff members announced his soon retirement. **David Roth** has been the Director of Volunteer Services for about 30 years in the Elmira hub that includes many correctional facilities in Central NY State.

When **Pastor Curt Carter** was a Western NY Field Director for **Prison Fellowship** in the early 1990’s, he met and invited Mr. Roth to speak at a PF volunteer event in Corning, NY. At that event, Mr. Roth made the comment that he really didn’t understand why the volunteers were so faithful to come into correctional facilities and serve prisoners. He added that he did, however, greatly appreciate volunteer commitment.

Pastor Curt wrote a “thank-you” letter to Mr. Roth and let him know that we go into prisons and jails because we go to visit our “boss” as Jesus said, **“I was in prison, and you came to me”** (Matthew 25:36). When we visit “the least” of Jesus’ brethren, we are visiting Him!



Top Photo: Chap. Jesse Barrett of Golden Key, Chap. Timothy Hawk of Elmira Correctional Facility & Pastor Curt Carter

Middle Photo: Pastor Curt Carter with DOC Director of Volunteers David Roth

Bottom Photo: David Roth speaking at a Prison Fellowship Volunteer Event in the early 1990’s

August 2016 Supporter’s Newsletter

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The Housecleaning Choice

"I openly examine my life, seek forgiveness and confess my faults to God and someone I trust."

The above statement is from **"Life's Healing Choices"** part of the Celebrate Recovery curriculum. It is called "The Housecleaning Choice" and it comes right after someone has made the choice to commit their lives and will to Jesus Christ as their "Higher Power." It is an intense choice because it means we have to dig through all the accumulated hurts, habits and hang-ups in our lives. That is a vital step in the process of purging our souls and beginning to transform into the person that God has always intended for us to be.



In a practical sense, this step is a familiar one to all of us because we have all had a time when our "junk" started to takeover. The closet, the garage, the attic, the basement, or drawers and cabinets in our homes get stuffed full of things we no longer need but are unwilling to part with. Many times these "things" have sentimental value or represent a project "unfinished" in our lives. Sometimes we become overwhelmed just thinking about throwing things out and cleaning up an area in our house. **Imagine how overwhelming it could be to begin housecleaning our minds and souls.**

But purging our souls is a necessary step to spiritual maturity. Celebrate Recovery is focused on housecleaning the causes of our hurts, habits, and hang-ups that cause us to turn to various addictions for relief. But even if we haven't turned to addictive behaviors we can still have untreated wounds in our souls that need healing so we can move on to being whole and healthy believers.



So here is where we ask the indwelling Holy Spirit of God to help us search through all the closets and cubby holes in our souls. We fearlessly write down the things that we find that are crippling to living a whole and happy life. We ask God to forgive us for the things we are responsible for. We forgive those that have hurt us to clear the bitterness and unforgiveness piling up in our souls. And then we talk to a trusted friend about what we have done. It is only then that we can experience being truly clean and moving forward as a healthy believer.

"Confess your faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed"

James 5:16

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