

OCTOBER 2022

# Living Stone Prison Church

Mike Durfee State Prison - Springfield, SD

# Freedom's Gate Church

4800 S Tomar St, Sioux Falls, SD

## “HYPER FOCUSED TO PERSEVERE”

As someone who has had a lifelong struggle due to ADHD characteristics (Pastor Jason, Freedom's Gate Church here) the word “FOCUS” comes to my mind often. In days gone by I had many people say to me, “Jason, you just need to focus”. Those individuals were correct, but very few really understood how hard it was for me to keep my mind tracking on the task at hand when there were so many other things around me vying for my attention. I was easily distracted by shiny objects or brief conversations about random things which made it difficult to get anything done quickly, and or correctly.

As I grew older, I learned that within the ADHD package is something beneficial called hyper focus or HF for short. The irony is that hyper focus allows someone with a distracted mind to focus their thoughts on one task at a time while ignoring unnecessary things. Using my HF properly has allowed me to work efficiently and successfully at the many tasks I do week to week. I've also learned that FOCUS is a vital spiritual discipline necessary in the life of all those who walk with Jesus, even more so for those with a “messy” past.

Pastor Dan Ebbens, has learned the same thing pastoring at Living Stone Prison Church. Inmates have many of their distractions removed when inside the prison walls. With time away from

MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR TO COME  
WORSHIP WITH US  
EVERY SUNDAY  
NIGHT AT 5:00

Please call Lauri at  
712.470.4165 to set up a  
date to come worship  
with the men at Mike  
Durfee State Prison!  
**Visitors are always  
appreciated!**

Would you be willing to  
make a meal and worship  
with us at Freedom's  
Gate? Please call or text  
Ruth at 605.366.3624 to  
find a date that works for  
you or check our  
MealTrain link on our  
website.

Check out our updated  
website for the calendar  
of open dates.



the busy pace of everyday life, many find themselves giving God the opportunity to speak to their hearts through the work of the inside church. Often the Grace of God, through Jesus Christ, ushers them into transformation and new life. Jesus becomes their “hyper focus” rightly centering Himself in their lives as the most important relationship they have, leaving everything else as secondary. That is one of the many reasons that we have witnessed God move powerfully in the Mike Durfee State Prison.

One of the big reasons that Freedom’s Gate Church exists in a sister church relationship with Living Stone is to offer a place to maintain focus. Several inmates who have returned to prison after their release pointed to the problem being a lapse in judgement due to a loss of spiritual focus. Hebrews 12:1-2 says this; Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

These verses are really a call to Hyper Focus on Jesus. We need to lay aside every weight (distractions that cause anxiety etc.) and sin which clings so closely. They distract from and put distance between us and the Truth. It is inevitable that an inmate, who is released from prison in good spiritual condition, will face the temptation of the “weight of the world” and do battle with the sin that tries to cling and drag them back down. One former inmate was in Christian leadership in the prison before his release after a 20- year sentence. He is now in full time ministry on the outside and said to me, “I get it now; I get why so many people return to prison. The call of the old man to do the old things is much louder out here than inside the walls.” The reason this man has maintained his freedom and is continuing to serve Jesus is that he remains Hyper Focused on the Author and Perfecter of his faith so that the best made plans of the enemy cannot drag him back into being who he had been before Jesus transformed him inside the prison. Focusing on JESUS doesn’t mean forgetting lesser tasks that have to be completed and other relationships that need to be fostered. It does however mean that persevering in life and faith are probable outcomes, and a fruitful life is ensured. (John 15:5)

Thank you for all your support in the mission of our 2 congregations as we seek to see people transformed by the message of the Gospel and walk in the new life of perseverance in the faith by hyper focusing on the One who made that faith possible by His work on the cross. It is with great joy that we’ve been able to facilitate true and lasting change in the lives of those we minister to inside the prison and in the city of Sioux Falls. We love to emphasize to our congregations the truth about a Jewish carpenter named Jesus Christ and the lasting change that happens when He is the FOCUS of their lives.

**IN CHRIST’S LOVE,**

**Pastor Dan and Natalie Ebbens (Living Stone)**

**Pastor Jason and Ruth Wiersma (Freedoms Gate)**

All contributions can be made payable  
to Living Stone Prison Church and sent to our treasurer:  
Brad Whitsell, PO Box 415, Yankton, SD 57078

**LivingStonePrisonChurch@gmail.com**  
**www.LivingStonePrisonChurch.org**

**Pastor Dan— 605.630.1807**

**Pastor Jason—605.667.0312**