



## The Courage to Embrace Others

Stonecroft mobilizes a movement of women to care for other women in many different places, in many different ways. Today you'll hear Donna's story, a woman who was reached while she was in prison and is now helping others.

"Guilty."

As they read the verdict, I laid my head down on the table in front of me. Feelings and thoughts swirled inside of me. It was overwhelming, and I did the only thing I knew to do in that moment. I silently prayed. "I thought you said you not to worry, that you'd take care of me."

And almost immediately, I heard His response.

"I will."

After that day, I would spend 30 years behind bars- and I would discover that God is true to His word. He was with me, every single day of my sentence.

Not very long after I arrived, I heard about a group that came inside the prison and offered an experience where women went through an intense 3-day faith journey. It was during this that I really experienced the love of God in a way that was personal and deep. It was different than the way I had viewed God before. It was so much more real and I began to know that He really was with me, taking care of me.

I began to lead Bible Studies and hold prayer times with the other women. Even when I changed units or was transferred, I would start more. I discovered God could use me, no matter where I was.

One time I was going to be transferred to another prison. A mentor came to me to pray with me about it. As she prayed, she said she knew God was sending me to the desert. I didn't understand what she meant by that, but I would understand once I arrived in the new location. The new prison didn't have a prayer or Bible Study presence, so I began to host them. The desert was the dry desperation apart from the presence of God. My mentor had inspired me to believe God sent me there to take the Living Water to those in need of it.

When I was released from prison, I went to live at a halfway house. It was there I began to notice invitations from a local group of women. They had monthly luncheons and a summer get together. I wanted to go but hesitated, feeling nervous and unsure. Then, one of the women from the local group came to the house and extended a personal invitation and I agreed to attend with her.

That luncheon was hosted by Stonecroft women in Gainesville, Florida.

I had no idea I would meet women who loved me so unconditionally. They warmly welcomed me, paid for my meals, and invited me to help.



# Friends of Stonecroft

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They heard my story and did not run away. In fact, they came closer. They were there for me and for my growth as a Christian.

Eventually I became the prayer coordinator for the group, and later led the Stonecroft Bible Study, Prayers Worth Repeating. But the biggest impact came when they extended their trust to me to run their database. It felt amazing to be given a role that required strong character - these women believed in me!

I still speak for the Florida Probation and Parole Commission. Each time, I tell them that the women of the Gainesville Stonecroft group helped me feel seen, known and loved by the way they live their faith.

My journey may seem pretty unique among other believing women, but one thing is true for all of us: Jesus is the One who makes the difference. We all need Him. I am grateful to be part of Stonecroft, helping more women to know the love of God through Jesus Christ.”

There are so many more women like Donna. They are waiting to be seen and loved, hurting and hungry for the hope of the Gospel.

And, Stonecroft is sending women to reach them, just as the Gainesville group reached Donna.

When you give to Stonecroft, you care for and mobilize a movement of Christian women praying and proclaiming the Gospel. You equip them with the training and resources they need to create welcoming spaces in their communities for women like Donna and make it possible for Stonecroft staff to come alongside leaders in prayer, support, and training.

It is easy to make a gift today to fund a movement of women. Your table host will pass around an envelope. Your cash or check gift can be placed in the envelope and returned to your table host. Please do not write your credit card information on the envelope. We encourage you to give by credit card if that is most convenient for you. The safest way to give by credit card is by using the QR code or the text to give link on the envelope. Make sure to put your group number and today's date in the comment section online. If you have any questions, your table host will be happy to assist you.

Please know that if you are a first-time guest today, your gift is your presence.

Thank you for mobilizing a movement of women to pray and proclaim the Gospel.