

## MINISTRY UPDATE – SEPTEMBER 2022

*Dear Praying Friends, shalom!*

Today we would like to share with you **the story of one of our Women Shelter's residents, Betty\***, who has been with us for one year already.

Betty\* is 24 years old. She was born in Israel, in a family of Russian Jewish immigrants. Her mother was a believer in Christ, and her father abused drugs and alcohol. Then the parents divorced, and Betty\* took it very hard, because she was only twelve then and was very attached to her father.

Betty's\* relationship with God was complicated. Throughout her childhood, as well as a teenager, she regularly attended church, but did so only to please her mother. She never had a personal relationship with God. She also felt quite lonely, since she could not fully identify herself neither with the believing kids in church nor with her unbelieving classmates.

At 18, Betty\* joined the army and there she finally found herself. First, she left the church and stopped living a double life. Second, she finally found friends she had been dreaming about for a long time, and third, she was given a responsible position where she could show her natural leadership abilities, which had never been noticed and appreciated before. Betty\* began to work so hard and with such devotion that she stopped caring for her own health. She was on duty mainly during night shifts, neglected sleep and nutrition, and was constantly in a state of stress.

When she finished serving in the army and returned to civilian life, she first started having severe headaches, which then spread to her neck, and eventually – to her entire body. Betty\* went to different doctors who did all kinds of check-ups and finally diagnosed her with fibromyalgia. She tried different medicine, but nothing would help, until someone advised her to try cannabis. This drug did relieve her pain a little, but at the same time clouded her thinking and her emotional state deteriorated considerably. Betty\* also found new friends who smoked cannabis too, but not for medical reasons, and these people had a bad influence on her.

I would say that Betty\*'s whole story is quite similar to that of the prodigal son. One year ago, she came to our Shelter in order to restore her relationship with God and improve her physical and emotional state. During this time, praise the Lord, she completely gave up cannabis and also stopped taking psychiatric meds, which she also used to treat fibromyalgia with. But most importantly, she did restore her relationship with God. Today, Betty\* loves to read and study the Bible, attends Shabbat services of the local Hebrew-speaking Messianic congregation regularly, got baptised this summer and also enrolled in Israel Bible College.

Sadly, she still suffers from pains, which sometimes become very severe, but her whole attitude has changed. She has got out of depression, began to discipline herself, eat healthy food and exercise as much as she can. "I want to keep fighting for my life"! – she tells us today. Please keep Betty\* in your prayers.

*News and prayer requests*

**Tel Aviv**

Our Shelter's manager Tatyana and volunteer Miriam\* keep going to Tel Aviv every Sunday to visit the ladies who work in the brothels next to Aviv Center. They come with small gifts and open hearts

to have fellowship with the ladies, get to know them better and share God's message of love and salvation with them. According to Tatyana's estimation, about 30 women work in these brothels during the day shifts and more come in the evening and night. There are several ladies who react negatively or even aggressively, but most gladly meet with Tatyana and Miriam\*, ready to talk and ask to pray for them. Please pray especially for Y. who was diagnosed with cervical cancer with metastases. She is 50 and is going through treatment, hoping to have a few more year to live. Pray that God His shines His light on her heart and mind.

### **Men's Rehab Center**

At present we have got 8 rehabilitants in the center. We are happy to see that the rehab's manager Wilhelm has managed to build very close and trusting relationships with them. He is not just their mentor and supervisor, but a friend who cares for their daily needs and helps them in various practical ways, not even waiting to be asked, but taking the initiative himself. He has truly found the key to their hearts. As a result, they become much more open and trusting, often ask for his advice and are eager to hear God's Word from him when they gather for daily Bible studies. They have much to learn indeed, as many have got only superficial or distorted knowledge about God. Please keep praying for them!

### **Women's Shelter**

Thank you for your prayers for our newest resident, Maya\*. She went through the withdrawals very quickly and easily (for her it was a miracle indeed) and remains clean, getting the support of the Shelter's staff and regularly attending the Shabbat services of our congregation. Still, she is a person of difficult disposition and Tatyana dedicates much time and effort to teaching and guiding her. Please keep praying for Maya\* as well as for all the other residents of the Shetler.

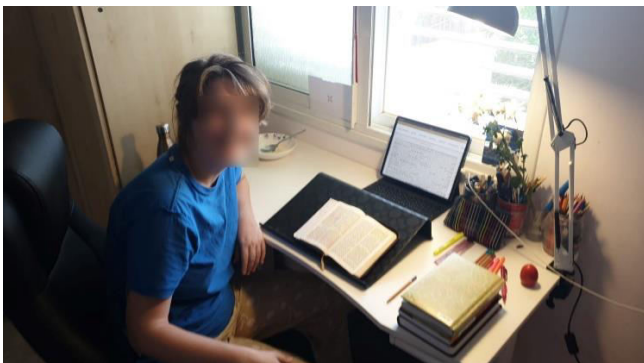
### **New Immigrants**

Recently Eduard has been helping an elderly couple who ran into certain difficulties and when the problems were solved, they said to him: "Thank you for doing this, here we have got nobody, but God and you..." It was very touching for Eduard to hear that. He keeps dedicating much time and energy to various needs of the immigrants, sharing God's Word and the Good News with them. Please keep this ministry in your prayers.

Thank you very much and may God keep you and bless you!

Yours in Him,

*Dov and Olga Bikas and Aviv Ministry Team*



Betty\* studying the Bible



Rehabilitants at our church service



Soup kitchen In Aviv Center

Eduard and his team helping an immigrant family move to a rented apartment

