

Job Description: Prison Ministry

A Christian ministry to those in prison is ordained by God, and is a vital outreach of the church. Consider the following points:

1. The sheep in the parable of Matthew 25 are commended by Jesus as worthy of eternal life, in part because they visited those in prison.
2. Prisoners and their families are among the most desperate of society and often considered least worthy of our time and attention. Jesus said, "If you have done it to one of the least of these, my brethren, you have done it to me."
3. Men and women in prison, regardless of their guilt or innocence, need to know that God has not forgotten, nor abandoned them.
4. The apostle Paul wrote many of his New Testament letters from inside a prison cell, and countless followers of Christ have been incarcerated down through the centuries.
5. According to Isaiah, the Messiah would come to "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

As disciples of Jesus, we are to carry on His work of bringing the message of liberty and freedom to those who are bound, not only physically, but, most of all, spiritually. The everlasting gospel, in the context of the three angels' messages, is the present truth that can bring all people, including prisoners, true freedom—freedom from sin. Therefore, this is the urgent message we must take to them at a time when they are, in many cases, more open to the offer of salvation than ever before.

Duties of the Prison Ministry Team Member:

The ministry to which a person is called when he or she becomes a member of Prison Ministries can best be described in the following ways:

- 1) Team members must submit to a background check, as required and conducted by local and state correctional institutions. Applications will be provided.
- 2) Team members will receive training in prison ministry from the Central Church Prison Ministry Director. Team members will be given basic training in the do's and don'ts of visiting inmates in the prison environment. Training will also include an personal evaluation of the type of incarceration center(s) most suitable for each team member to visit. (ie. Not all are suited to visit death row inmates, etc.)
- 3) Team members will be taken through orientation programs that are specific to each institution. After completing orientation training, team members will be given a visitation pass which must be worn at all times during visitations.
- 4) Team members, upon completion of background checks and training, will visit jails, prisons, and detention centers in the St. Louis area, as well as throughout the state of Missouri, as the ministry expands from local to state-wide. A visitation schedule will be established to make regular visits to approved incarceration centers.
- 5) During prison visitations, team members will have opportunities to engage in: praise and worship services; sharing testimonies and words of encouragement; prayer; and transportation of family members to visit inmates.

Time Commitment:

The amount of time required to visit will vary between 2-3 hours per month.