

Mission Statement

To establish and strengthen the Christian life of inmates and their families by providing opportunities for worship, instruction, nurturing of children, fellowship, service, mutual aid, brotherly counsel, and to establish and strengthen the Christian life of evangelism. To bring the Gospel to the unsaved and to lead them to faith in Christ followed by membership in the body of Christ.

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Rehoboth Jail & Prison Ministry

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Rehoboth Jail & Prison Ministry

Support Groups



For families who have a
friend or member
incarcerated.

Starting a Support Group

A Support Group is a ministry for people who have family members or good friends incarcerated. It could actually begin at the time the inmate is charged with a crime and begins the court procedure, unless the person is out on bond. Perhaps then family members might want to wait until the inmate is convicted and actually begins serving the sentence. However, if the inmate remains in jail and does not make bond, the family might want to start a group or form one in their area right away. The one being charged with the crime is never the only one who suffers during this time. A support group can help with practical, as well as spiritual and emotional issues.

The Support Group can choose their own leaders or rotate the leader of the meetings as often as necessary to avoid leader burnout. They could have their meetings as often as the group decides, but it should be on a regular schedule so as not to lose the effectiveness of the group. Many families are overwhelmed when a family member or friend is first incarcerated, and with proper fellowship it will be less critical. If this is the case in your group, you might have a turnover of members. If possible, the group could still keep in touch with the longer-term members. This actually might draw them back into the meetings. Their experience and survival skills would be of great help and encouragement to the newer families who are still struggling to cope and wondering how they will get through such a situation.

Rehoboth Jail & Prison Ministry would be happy to help with beginning such a Support Group, and after it is set up we could visit periodically, or help with other forms of assistance if a special need arises.

SOME SUGGESTIONS TO HELP YOU GET STARTED



Why should a person endure their partner's incarceration alone? The church could be there for them.

1. Be sure to allow everyone to vent their suffering in a safe and soothing manner.
2. Be sure you make time enough during the meeting for everyone to be heard.
3. Sometimes letting someone different run the meeting each time might help people open up better, or the group may decide to have one leader for a period of time. Each group can be managed within the group by those members who are participating.
4. The schedule of the meeting is of the utmost importance. If you set it for once a month, remain faithful to that day. If it is twice a month or once a week, do not get in a habit of cancelling a meeting for trivial things. If the group is important enough to the ones who have started it, it should remain important enough to keep the scheduled meetings.
5. Keep a local pastor as a mentor to the group. If Rehoboth Jail & Prison Ministry can be of any help from time to time we would be happy to do so.
6. It is our desire to have the group to look to God for guidance. Having a local pastor involved in case he is needed to counsel would be helpful. Also participants should consider being membership in a local church. It's very helpful.

7. The support group will very likely include mothers, daughters, sons, fathers, husbands, and wives, therefore it is important to be mindful of the different ages involved. Since this support group is a family group, everyone should be included in the meeting, from children to grandparents.
8. The meeting should begin with a prayer and Scripture reading, and perhaps a short time of sharing how the week has been for some who might like to share.
9. Sharing the letters from those incarcerated with the group could encourage the group to become closer and help everyone to see the various ways people handle incarceration.

If you have a loved one or close friend who is incarcerated, being a pen pal to him or her is a true blessing. There is nothing like going to mail call and hearing your name. Phone calls could be expensive within the prison system, although they are much more reasonable than



they used to be. Letters are a lot more economical while still allowing you to keep in touch. In many prisons they are offering e-mail between families now. If you have ever been away from home and homesick you know how important mail is. If your family member or friend is transferred, this ministry can help put you in touch with the right website to get all the information needed to find out about the new institution. The DOC has a website and a phone number (1-800-476-4943) to keep track of the inmates including when they will be released and other important matters that might change from one institution to another.

Let us help you start a Support Group through your local church.