



For the health of public safety agencies, employees, and families

Foundations and Best Practices for Correctional Staff Outreach

Guidance for Biblically-Based Fellowships and Congregations

A. Launch Framework for Correctional Staff Outreach

1. Initial Planning

- Determine the size and scope of the outreach effort.
- Define time parameters, if any (e.g., pilot period, seasonal outreach, or ongoing commitment).
- Establish the budget, if any, and identify required resources.
- Clarify goals, anticipated activities, and capacity of volunteers.
- Establish methods to evaluate effectiveness, including measurable indicators, feedback mechanisms, and periodic review points.

2. Reasons for Outreach

- Support a high-stress, high-risk workforce.
- Demonstrate care, respect, and non-proselytizing presence.
- Bridge gaps between the congregation and those who serve in corrections.
- Provide practical, emotional, and spiritual support.

3. Use Volunteers from the Fellowship/Congregation

- Distinguish between:
 - Correctional staff who are members of the congregation.
 - Correctional staff who are not (i.e., the outreach population).

B. Building Blocks of Effective Correctional Staff Outreach

1. Volunteer Training and Preparation

- Provide an initial short presentation to the full congregation.
- Offer an in-depth 4+ hour training for interested volunteers.
- Require volunteers to sign a code of conduct agreement addressing:
 - Boundaries.
 - Target population, characteristics, and needs.
- Educate volunteers on:
 - The dual role of corrections staff (law enforcement + social-service functions).
 - Mental health struggles common among staff.

- Worldview impacts (mistrust, social withdrawal, moral injury).
- The importance of avoiding proselytizing and offering unconditional presence.
- Use of active-listening skills.
- [REBOOT Recovery](#) program information.
- [Spiritual First Aid](#) program information.
- Arrange visits to a jail or prison if feasible and appropriate.
- Provide ongoing training, with deeper content as volunteers gain experience.
- Develop policies for managing:
 - Crisis disclosures (e.g., suicidal ideation, threats, criminal acts).
 - Mandatory reporting responsibilities.

2. Intercessory Prayer

- Offer private, dedicated prayer for correctional staff (weekly or monthly).
- Establish a prayer chain.
- Provide a method for anonymous prayer requests.

3. Support for Family Members

- Extend care to families of correctional staff.
- Offer appreciation, acknowledgment of the toll of corrections work, and emotional support.

4. Practical Support

- Meal trains for illness, recovery, or newborns.
- Assistance with house moves.
- Help with small home repairs.
- Cards or notes of encouragement.
- Cold water bottles during hot months.
- Childcare support, especially for single-parent COs (with appropriate insurance coverage and safeguards).
- A listening presence when requested.
- Bible study or other one-on-one mentoring when requested.

5. Appreciation Events

- Host an annual appreciation banquet.
- Recognize individuals or commendable actions.

6. Attendance at Key Life Events

- Participate when welcome or invited:
 - Weddings.
 - Funerals.
 - Memorial services.

7. Provide Resources

- Educational and supportive materials for staff and families, such as:
 - Booklets or literature lists.
 - Curated YouTube videos.
 - Helpful websites.
 - Hotline numbers.

8. Debriefing After Outreach Activities

- Conduct structured debriefs after each outreach effort.

9. Website Presence

- Create a dedicated page on the fellowship's website explaining:
 - Purpose and reasons for outreach.
 - Activities, methods, and expectations.

10. Broader Education

- Offer to train or brief other congregations interested in similar outreach.