

KING'S KATCHUP

To "catch you up" on the Gospel work of Jim and Pat King

Dear Ones in the Lord,

Here is some helpful information about the jail ministry we are involved in at this time.

TEN WAYS PRISON MINISTRY PROMOTES CHURCH GROWTH

"I never shared my faith with anyone until I got involved in prison ministry." "Prison work taught me the true meaning of forgiveness, repentance, and restoration." "My prayer life has a new lease on life due to jail ministry."

These comments from recent prison (or jail) ministry volunteers capture some of the joy and spiritual excitement of this strategically important church ministry. The growth of the local church is built on the personal spiritual growth of its members. Prison ministry offers unique, vital opportunities for personal spiritual growth because volunteers get personally involved, even immersed, in the gospel basics: witnessing, Bible teaching, counseling, worship, and encouragement. And when church members catch fire for the Lord, it won't be long before the church grows.

Let's explore ten core impacts prison ministry can have on the local church and its members:

1. Prison ministry is America's largest spiritual harvest field. There are more than a million inmates, many of whom are genuinely seeking change, stability, and love in their lives. Many inmates acknowledge that coming to prison was "the best thing that ever happened to me" because they encountered Christ.

2. Prison ministry does wonders for revitalizing the spiritual lives of volunteers (and subsequently their churches). There's nothing like sharing the gospel to open ears, teaching the Word to thirsty minds, and praying for people with broken hearts to "rev up" one's spiritual life and commitment. And he newfound spiritual enthusiasm of a prison volunteer is infectious, quickly spreading throughout his or her Sunday school class and friendship network.

3. Prison ministry breathes new life into church evangelism and outreach programs. Unfortunately many evangelism and visitation programs are either stillborn or impotent because charged up church members experience so few genuine opportunities to share their faith and see God reap the harvest. Doors are shut in their face, invitations rejected, and the same prospect cards endlessly recycled. In prison ministry, by contrast, spiritually hungry inmates come to the Christian volunteer, often in bountiful numbers--and all under the careful supervision and organization of the chaplain's office!

4. Prison work can be a real shot in the arm to the Sunday school ministry. Class members can pray for inmates on a personal level, participate in "pen pal" correspondence with recently converted inmates, and pray for and encourage those who actually represent the class "behind the walls." Inmates are invariably deeply moved to know that a whole class is regularly praying for them. (This is the first time many inmates have ever experienced genuine love from anyone.) Some Sunday school classes even "adopt" an inmate's family in their local area, opening up the vital new arena of compassion ministry.

5. Prison ministry enhances worship. Many prison volunteers receive a renewed vision for worship while

attending church services behind the walls. When repentant Christians of all colors meet together to express their love for Christ and joy in being spiritual brothers and sisters, things happen. Prison worship is never characterized by stale routine or manufactured emotion--inmates definitely see themselves as God's chosen people, not God's frozen people!

6. Prison ministry enhances the church training effort by preparing volunteers to minister to the unique needs of incarcerated Christians. What they learn about sharing their faith, counseling Bible study, and follow-up is equally applicable in "free world" ministry. Knowing they will actually utilize these skills upon entering prison makes volunteers attentive, serious learners.

7. Prison ministry gets church members off the pews and outside church walls. Christians of all backgrounds, education levels, and varieties of spiritual gifts participate in prison/jail ministry. Men and women, young and old, new Christian and "senior saint" all have a place chosen by God to serve. And prison work is never very far away: city and county jails, juvenile detention centers, state and federal prisons, and "halfway houses."

8. Prison ministry teaches deep spiritual lessons, such as how to forgive, how to restore, and how to really pray (reminding that God does all the work in prison ministry). It also teaches very practical lessons about listening, patience, cross-cultural communication, and theological diversity among Christians.

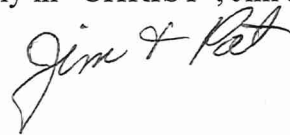
9. Prison ministry promotes cooperation and goodwill among diverse Christians from different background. Paul's admonition to keep our eyes upon Christ was never more true than in prison ministry.

10. Prison ministry produces new church members and ministry volunteers. Christians who become active in the spiritual basics of witnessing, spiritual teaching/counseling, and prayer gain a renewed desire to serve their local churches. Just listen to the testimony of pastors and lay people actively engaged in prison work--there's always an unmistakable spark of joy and enthusiasm when they share their experiences before the local church.

As we write letter, Jim has just finished several weeks in the hospital. He had a bad infection in his left foot and had to have an operation. He is home now taking antibiotics and trying to get used to a wound vac. Do pray for God to give complete healing of this foot so that he can get back to his jail ministry soon.

Once again, THANK YOU for your support of our gospel work. We praise the Lord for some of you that have been with us for many years!

Sincerely in "CHRIST", Jim and Pat



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If you feel the Lord would have you give
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