

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Prison Chaplaincy
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April 2009

1. What is a Prison/Jail Chaplain and how do I know I am called to be a Prison/Jail Chaplain?

A: A Prison Chaplain is a minister that is called to touch lives outside the “normal church setting”. The call is unique in that there tends to be a real burden for prisoners, corrections officers, and their families. With the call, comes a desire to minister God’s love to the “least of these, my brethren.” A gift of compassion and grace usually accompanies this calling.

2. What does a Prison/Jail Chaplain do?

A: A Prison/Jail Chaplain ministers to inmates, correctional staff, and their families during times of great personal stress. They encourage, counsel, and instruct inmates and their families in Godly living. They do this by their ministry of presence in their institution. Specifically, they offer counseling, Bible Studies, Worship Services, Communion and instruction in the Word of God. They may provide free Bibles, Correspondence Courses, and other Christian literature for the inmates. They may also minister to inmate families, and correctional staff with counseling and assistance as needed. In many prisons, they also serve as a volunteer coordinators for religious services, overseeing the management of volunteers from different faith groups and denominations.

3. What training is necessary to function as a Prison/Jail Chaplain and how do I get it?

A: The training required varies, depending on the institution. Generally, most prisons require at least a college degree, and some clinical pastoral education. Experience teaching Bible Studies, preaching, and counseling, obtained through service in the church, helps to prepare one for ministry in a correctional setting. Specific training for Prison/Jail Chaplaincy can be obtained through organizations such as “The Good News Jail & Prison Ministry”, Billy Graham’s “Institute For Prison Ministry”, and COPE (The Coalition of Prison Evangelists). Training in Critical Incident Stress Management, Crisis Intervention, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is also helpful.

4. How do I get started as a Prison/Jail Chaplain?

A: Start by talking to your Pastor and sharing your heart so that your local Foursquare Church can be a prayer support and resource. Touch base with the local Police Department, area prison, or Community Chaplain program to see if they have a Chaplaincy program currently operating that you can join. After a reasonable season of volunteering (6 months to a year), seek endorsement from the local church and then the National Foursquare Church.

5. QUESTION: I already am a Prison/Jail Chaplain, but how do I connect with the Foursquare Chaplain Department?

A: Contact Jeff Mink at the Foursquare Chaplaincy office located at the National Church Office in Los Angeles. He will then connect you with the Fire Chaplain Coordinator.

6. QUESTION: I feel a calling to become Prison/Jail Chaplain but where do I start?

A: Start with your local Foursquare pastor. With his or her blessing, then contact Jeff Mink (see below) at the Foursquare Chaplaincy office located at the National Church Office in Los Angeles. He will connect you with the Prison/Jail Chaplain Coordinator.

For more information about Foursquare Chaplaincy, contact us at chaplains@foursquare.org. Comments about this document are also welcome.