

## **WHY DO WE INVITE THESE PEOPLE INTO OUR CHURCH? (part 2)**

### **Our History**

GRN, Nursing Home, Jail Ministry, Second Mile House, Homeless families: our congregation has a history of inviting the poor, lost, homeless, addicted and sick into our fellowship.

We not only go out to meet them wherever there are, but we invite them to worship and fellowship with us.

Why go? And why bring them into our fellowship?

**Foremost, because we are sent.** Not by the church but by the Son! The church doesn't send. The church goes. And then all the new believers fellowship together. This is clear from Mathew 28 and Acts 2. If we are to go and take the gospel, then we are obliged to fellowship with the new believers, whether formerly addicts, alcoholics, sick, imprisoned, homeless, helpless, single parents or broken up families. In fact, obliged is not the best word. More like privileged. Because that's where Jesus Christ will be found.

**The first reason we invite them to worship with us is to provide them with what they've been missing.** As an example, consider this.

At the Gwinnett County Detention Center (Jail), over 2200 men and women are cut off from worship experiences that we take for granted: Lord's Supper, baptism, first century worship.

**A second reason we reach out and invite them in is that that they might be us! Or our brother. Or our son. Or our sister.**

Occasionally we encounter a couple or a parent in the waiting room at the detention center. They may be a neighbor, parents from the soccer team, members of our church or someone from our social circle or work environment.

They are there to bail out a child or visit a sibling or contact a niece or nephew. Or a husband or brother. They may be there to say goodbye to a loved one sentenced to hard time in a tough institution in a locale far away.

The congregation doesn't know this happens because we don't mention it. We treat these encounters as confidential. We don't tell neighbors, coworkers, or church members.

And if we encounter that brother, son, daughter, or spouse as part of our bible class, we keep that confidential until that person decides for themselves to tell others. Even then, we keep our discussions with them private.

We reach out to them because they are, occasionally, us! If I fail or fall, then I want someone to bring the gospel message of forgiveness to me. And remind me of the path to forgiveness and reconciliation.

**Further, we minister to the sons and daughters of someone else because we hope that someone else is ministering to our sons and daughters.**

Don't be naive! Every family in the church has a family member in jail, in trouble, in addiction, and in need of redemption.

They are not listening to us, their family, or the church they grew up in. Otherwise, they wouldn't be in the situation they're in! They need to hear the truth from another source.

We are that other voice. And someone else is that other voice for our sons and daughters.

And so, we continue. And so, we invite them to fellowship with us.