



WHAT IS A **PrisonCare** COMPASSION TEAM?

A PrisonCare Compassion Team is a group of people who come together to choose one specific prison and offer support to the people groups behind its fences.

PrisonCare, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to equipping people on a compassion team to support positive prison culture from the outside.

Taking the first step in PrisonCare means caring **ABOUT** a prison community.

A PrisonCare compassion team chooses ONE prison to care for. Perhaps it's a prison nearby geographically. Perhaps it's the prison where someone on your team has a loved one who is incarcerated, or a loved one who is employed. Whatever the reason, your team chooses a single facility to "adopt," to learn about and care about in an intentional way.

Taking the next step means caring **FOR** a prison community.

By offering CARE to the people who make up the prison neighborhood, we meet a vital need.

Just as the facility needs electricity and the residents need food, the prison neighborhood needs care from the outside. Prisons are tough places to spend your days, and the compassionate care of people outside the walls, offered in non-traditional ways, can help to create a positive prison culture.

So, what type of care are we talking about?

PERSONAL and FLEXIBLE are the PrisonCare Compassion Team distinctives.

It's Personal

PrisonCare groups choose ONE SPECIFIC PRISON on which to focus their care.

Choosing to care for a specific prison is important because it roots the care in a commitment to **PEOPLE** rather than to a CAUSE.

Caring for a specific facility will make that neighborhood and its inhabitants real and important to you.

When people who have been ignored or forgotten become the focus of personal concern, the impact of that LOVE is profound. The team committed to caring for the facility is more likely to stay involved, because they cannot easily dismiss people with whom they have formed a connection, even as their interest in prison reform issues waxes and wanes. PrisonCare is, at its core, about a LOVING RELATIONSHIP with the people who make up a particular prison neighborhood.

It's Flexible

PrisonCare groups do not need background checks or training before they can become involved (as they do in traditional prison ministries). They do not have to make a weekly or monthly time commitment that may be hard to honor.

The individual degree of involvement can be whatever each group member needs it to be. PrisonCare really only requires the passion of ONE point person in your group to get things started. After the ball gets rolling, it's easy to adjust each member's activity level to their capacity in any given season.

It will take some time to build relationships with residents and staff on the inside, but once trust has been earned, the folks on the inside will begin to share their needs with you, and together you will explore ways to be an effective support to them.

Personal and flexible care from a PrisonCare compassion team falls into a few general categories. Your group may decide to engage in some or all of these activities over time, but starting super-small is just fine:

- ◆ Prayer (by people of faith)
- ◆ Letter-writing to residents
- ◆ Raising awareness in your community
- ◆ Appreciating prison staff
- ◆ Creatively supporting families impacted by your prison
- ◆ Advocating for prison reform

Take a look at the PDF called ***What Your Group Can Do*** on the PrisonCare.org website for lots of specific ideas!