

Conducting Effective Bible Classes and Worship Services in Jails and Prisons

The following is an outline taken from the presentation by Ron Hass since the audio version was unusable: Ron is the Director of Owasso Prison Ministries.

1. Do not get involved in their cases.
2. Your purpose is not to make their physical circumstances better, but their spiritual.
3. While you are in the presence of officers or prisoners, be sure to make it known by your actions and words that you respect governing authorities. This will get you farther than creating friction between you and the prison system.

Romans 13:1-5 “1Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.”

4. Be honest and moral with prisoners. You cannot fool them. They need to know that you honor God with all your heart. They need to know that ministers to the prison system are not second class.

5. Believe in them. Give the Lord an opportunity to change them. Encourage prisoners to let Jesus change them. Follow-up after release. Help inmates connect with a church home. Teach them to think, not just feel when it comes to finding a church home that the God would approve of. Feed off of these passages.

Hebrews 4:12-14 “12For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. 13Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 “4Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

6. Share your faith, not your doubts, frustrations, hurts, and prejudices. Give them the facts about scripture. Tell them scripture is good ground to stand on.

7. Encourage reverence in the assembly.

8. Prepare well, even for a small group. Know your text and what it is intended to say. Anticipate and encourage questions.

James 3:1 “1Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.”