

WHAT DOES THE INMATE EXPECT?

A person who is incarcerated may expect everyone he contacts to do certain things for him, such as: checking on his family, writing letters, making phone calls, or even loaning him or her money. He (or she) may expect you to believe their innocence or being a victim of society. He may expect to gain a good report by attending the meetings and will ask for your recommendation for parole or other consideration. In all of the above it is best not to encourage this kind of dependance. Your purposes are to relate to the inmate in such a way that they become stronger in the management of their own lives. Doing favors may contradict institution policy or not be in the best interest of the inmate. Some favors are in order but it is urged that you check with the chaplain as to the appropriateness of particular requests.

It is natural for these expectations to be present in inmates lives. We recognize them and realize that inmates have the same basic feelings, needs, and expectations, as has the outsider. We must exercise wisdom, understanding, and prayerful consideration as to how we may best meet these needs.

In asking the question, "Who Are the Offenders?" We must remember we are working with real persons with real needs. Each person we meet within the prison is an individual with very personal needs, hopes, fears, dreams, and possibilities. We can best serve that person by being honest, understanding, fair, and encouraging them to develop their gifts and talents.

By careful and by prayerful listening, we may discover ways of meeting expectations in far more creative ways than simply trying to carry out the wishes of an inmate. We may enable them to meet and solve their problems themselves by enabling them to gain new insights into possibilities within their situation.