



YOKEFELLOWSHIP PRISON MINISTRY

PO Box 531, REEDSVILLE, PA 17084 www.yokefellowship.net



Church Partnership Agreement (for Ministering to Returning Citizens)

INTRODUCTION Yokefellowship Prison Ministry (YPM), organized in 1955, has been committed to “helping at-risk youth, inmates, and **returning citizens** yoke themselves to Christ for salvation and changed lives.” YPM desires to partner with churches who agree with YPM Statement of Faith (See Attachment) and are willing to help returning citizens successfully transition back into society through the transforming power of Christ and the love and support that comes with being part of a loving Body of Christ.

Therefore, for the sake of our common goal, YPM and _____ agree to enter into a Ministry Partnership arrangement.

INVITATION TO COVENANT

Such churches are invited into a covenant with YPM who ministers to inmates and those who were recently incarcerated – the least of these, (Matt 25) i.e., those not welcomed by society.

Our covenant goal is to help returning citizens successfully transition back into society by helping them: develop healthy relationships, develop a new way of thinking, see themselves and others as God sees them, take responsibility and be accountable in all areas of their lives, etc.

Someone from YPM will personally meet with interested churches to answer any questions and to discuss concerns and options for ministry.

BENEFITS AND RISKS

BENEFITS - Not only will the lives of returning citizens be changed through corporate ministry partnerships, but their lives will then impact others, in the home and outside the home. **Communities will be safer:** fewer victims, safer neighborhoods, reduced court cases, fewer prisoners, etc.

Those who minister will receive both temporal and eternal benefits, becoming more like Christ in the process and storing up treasures in heaven.

RISKS – Without a doubt, risks come with ministry; to serve is to be vulnerable. There is the risk of getting ripped off, being used, or just being unappreciated. In general, ministering to returning citizens will increase those risks. Knowing this is possible, being prepared and equipped to handle it if it occurs and understanding God’s desires will assure the enemy does not ultimately win this battle of discouragement. (2 Cor 4:11)

It should be noted that, in general, returning citizens can walk into any establishments at any time unbeknownst to others. Becoming a partner with YPM will help assure that you would have a healthy and safe environment.

PROMISES

YPM will seek to:

- Be available to assist and answer questions.
- Offer a network of information through our website, volunteers and staff.
- Communicate the times of services and contact information of Partnering Churches to returning citizens.
- When requested, share testimonies, in-person or written of those who have successfully reintegrated back into society.
- When requested, and when available, have a YPM volunteer attend the church along with the returning citizen.
- Provide information on how to assure a safe environment.
- Share common concerns and challenges and the approaches used by other partnering churches.
- Share the list of partnering churches with
 - YPM affiliates (Area Councils)
 - inmates with whom YPM volunteers have ministered (with permission only)
 - the public through Yokefellowship.net website (with permission only)

Church Partners will seek to:

- Provide an atmosphere of grace, mercy and nurture for returning citizens.
- Offer opportunities for relationships, spiritual development and personal growth beyond the Sunday worship services.
- Be committed to love and help the returning citizen develop to their fullest potential in Christ.
- When information is provided, establish a relationship with a soon-to-be-released inmate who will be returning to your area.
- Identify any limitations they may have on welcoming returning citizens (such as type of crime).
- Request assistance should problems arise.
- Share concerns and report any problems to YPM.

DURATION

The duration of this agreement will be initially for one year then subsequently at regular intervals determine by both ministries. At or near the end of those times representatives from both partners shall discuss the effectiveness of the agreement, the need for changes, if any, and to decide whether or not to continue the partnership. In some cases, in the Bible, covenants were discussed and relationships strengthened around food. One way to review and renew the relationship would be over a covenant meal.

Either party may dissolve the partnership at any time by notifying the other partner in writing.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Should a Partnering Church change their beliefs such that they no longer are in agreement with YPM’s Statement of Faith they shall notify YPM immediately and the agreement will be dissolved.

REPRESENTATIVES:

The following individuals represent the Ministry Partners:

Yokefellowship Prison Ministry’s representative:

_____	_____
Printed name,	Position

_____	_____
Signature	Date

Partnering Church’s representative:

_____	_____
Printed name,	Position

_____	_____
Signature	Date

Yokefellowship Prison Ministry Statement of Faith

We in Yokefellowship Prison Ministry believe:

- **God** - There is one eternal, almighty, and perfect God in essence, revealed in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We are faithful to the biblical revelation that in one sense God is one and in a different sense He is three. Deut 6:4, Matt 3:16-17, Matt 28:19
- **Jesus Christ** - Jesus Christ is true God and true Man, born of a virgin, died for our sins, rose from the dead, and will return in glory and power. Matt 1:20, Matt 16:27, Rom 1:3-4
- **The Holy Spirit** - When a person becomes born again, by believing and receiving Jesus Christ, God resides in that person through the Holy Spirit. All the divine attributes ascribed to the Father and the Son are equally ascribed to the Holy Spirit. Gen 1:26, Acts 2:28, 1 Cor 3:16
- **The Word** - The Bible is the inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God given through the Holy Spirit for the purpose of teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. 2 Tim 3:16-17, Heb 4:12-13, 2 Pet 1:20-21
- **The Fall** - God created mankind in His own image, but through the fall in the Garden of Eden man was removed from the Garden and separated from God. Thus, we are all sinners and cannot earn God's favor on our own. Gen 3, Rom 3:23
- **The Plan** – God's original plan to give mankind eternal life was rejected by Adam and Eve. In God's redemptive plan, man is rescued from death by the priceless shed blood of Jesus Christ. His atoning death on the cross ended the separation for all those who come to Him. Rom 4:23-25, Eph 2:8, 1 Pet 3:18
- **The Way** – Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. No one goes to the Father except through Him. Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved. John 14:6, John 20:31, Acts 4:10-12
- **The Call** – Everyone who is reconciled to God through Christ Jesus is called to be a minister of reconciliation – an ambassador of Christ. As Yokefellows, we are called to provide a ministry of reconciliation to those who are or were incarcerated, always showing love and respect to all persons. Matt 5:16, 2 Cor 5:20, Eph 6:17-20
- **The Body of Christ** – All believers are members of the body of Christ. With Christ as the "head," every member is called to have a personal relationship with Him, to be His disciple, to love one another, and to use our gifts for the body. John 12:26, 1 Cor 12:27, Col 1:18
- **The New Covenant** – Those who yoke themselves to Christ are no longer part of the Old Covenant. Though the OT law is good in that it showed us our need for Christ and how to please God, Christians live by and are under a new covenant of grace alone. Having been released from the law, we are to live by grace and our lives are to continually reflect the glory of God. Gal 3:13-14, Gal 3:19, 1 Tim 1:8
- **The Reward** - For taking the message of God's transforming love and forgiveness to captives and sharing the grace that has been given to us, great will be our reward in heaven. Matt 5:12, Matt 25:34-36, 1 Pet 1:3-5

(Adopted 9/15/07 Rev 4/9/11, 4/29/17, 8/3/20 (added scripture references))