

PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR THOSE IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

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The Church provides support to adults and youth who are incarcerated. The following instructions explain the type of support that may be provided and how it is administered through priesthood channels.

ADMINISTRATION

Based on the resources available, the stake president determines the support that is to be provided to those who are incarcerated at correctional facilities within the boundaries of the stake. He also supervises the support, assisted by other local priesthood leaders. If the stake needs help providing service to correctional facilities within its boundaries, a member of the Presidency of the Seventy or Area Presidency may assign one or more nearby stakes to assist and to serve as the agent stake to the facility. Members called to serve may come from outside the agent stake boundaries with the approval of the member's stake president.

The agent stake president or an assigned bishop may call a priesthood holder to oversee the support that is given to individuals confined at these institutions. Normally, men should be called to work with male inmates; however, a husband and wife may also be called to work with male inmates. At least two men, two women, or a husband and wife should be called to work with female inmates. Men and women called to work with inmates should not be alone with them.

If appropriate, the agent stake president obtains approval to organize a correctional facility branch (see *Book 1*, 9.1.10). For guidelines on correctional facility branch organization and operation, see Correctional Facility Branch below.

Direction and training for agent stake presidencies and for correctional facility branch presidencies is provided by an assigned Area Seventy, as needed, and by others who may be called to assist.

TYPES OF SUPPORT

Worship Services

Worship services are generally available to all incarcerated persons who are eligible to attend based on facility regulations. The services may be simplified

as necessary to meet the needs of those involved. Services usually follow the same format as sacrament meeting, except that the sacrament is not administered. As an exception to Church policy, incarcerated persons may participate in services by offering prayers and giving talks, regardless of their religious affiliation or standing in the Church.

Worship services should be clearly identified as being provided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They may be provided at more than one location within a correctional facility, as permitted.

Other Support

Other support that may be given to incarcerated persons where permitted by the correctional facility includes home teaching, visiting teaching, Sunday School classes, family home evening group, seminary or institute classes, and other special programs such as family history work and the LDS Family Services addiction recovery program.

Where authorized by the correctional facility, arrangements may be made to provide incarcerated persons with copies of the scriptures, *True to the Faith*, Church magazines, and the *Church News*. These publications could also be made available in a library.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Members called to serve in correctional facilities provide support in spiritual and temporal matters and maintain appropriate relationships with incarcerated persons.

Members called to serve in correctional facilities should:

- Understand and adhere to the policies and procedures of the institution.
- Understand and be respectful of the judicial process, including probation and parole.
- Not give their home address or telephone number to those who are incarcerated.

When appropriate and when permitted, priesthood blessings may be given.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY BRANCH

The following explains the organization and operation of correctional facility branches.

Branch Presidency

The correctional facility branch presidency is called by the agent stake president and serves under his direction. (For a few designated facilities in Utah and Idaho, the First Presidency has authorized the call of bishops, rather than branch presidents. Bishops should continue to be called in these units unless otherwise directed by the First Presidency.)

The branch president presides over all branch meetings. He recommends to the agent stake president the names of individuals and couples to serve in the facility.

The branch president helps incarcerated members with the repentance process. As needed, an appropriate course of action for Church discipline is determined (see *Book 1*, chapter 6).

Although branch presidents have authority to perform civil marriages, they should not perform marriages in correctional facilities.

The branch presidency also has the following responsibilities:

- Maintain cordial relationships with the officials and officers at the correctional facility.
- Ensure that reports and an annual budget are submitted to the agent stake presidency.
- Assist as permitted in the transition of individuals being paroled or released (see *Transition to a Home Ward or Branch* below).
- Assist members called to serve, special guests, and visitors to obtain necessary clearance for admission to the facility. Contact officials at the correctional facilities for details.

Branch Organization

In addition to the branch presidency, an executive secretary and/or branch clerk may be called. Depending upon needs, other callings may include a music chairman, Sunday School teachers, family home evening group teachers, institute or seminary instructors, family history center workers, and auxiliary presidencies. Individuals called to serve in correctional facilities should be worthy of a temple recommend. Incarcerated persons are not called to Church positions, but may participate by offering prayers, giving talks, or fulfilling other appropriate

assignments, regardless of their religious affiliation or standing in the Church.

Records and Reports

Membership Record. The membership records of those who are incarcerated for less than three months should remain in their home ward. If a person will be incarcerated for more than three months, the membership record should be moved to the correctional facility branch. When an incarcerated member is released, the membership is moved to the unit where he or she will reside.

If an incarcerated person has been excommunicated, there is no membership record. However, with the person's consent, his or her former bishop may share relevant information about the person with the correctional facility branch president.

Quarterly Report. The branch clerk prepares and submits the Quarterly Report—Ward/Branch. For correctional facility branches, attendance at the worship service is to be counted as sacrament meeting attendance. Attendance figures should include all persons—including Church members and others—attending the worship service.

Budget

The budget allowance provides general Church funds to pay for the activities and programs of correctional facility branches. The agent stake president determines how much of the stake funds are allocated to the branch (see *Book 1*, 14.7).

Transition to a Home Ward or Branch

When a person is released from a correctional facility, his or her needs become the responsibility of a home ward or branch. Accordingly, correctional facility branch presidents should work with the home ward or branch priesthood leaders during the transition. This process should begin three months before the person's release date. Legal and other specialized matters should be left to professionals.

For Additional Assistance

In collaboration with the Priesthood Department at Church headquarters, Welfare Services is responsible for materials and professional resources to assist those in correctional institutions and their families. For assistance contact Welfare Services or a member of the Presidency of the Seventy or Area Presidency.