

A NEW MISSION

Church members may have failed to obey Christ's mandate to visit those in prison, but the presence of this one individual might help launch a new mission within your church.

Consider:

- Setting aside rooms and times for groups such as SA to meet at your church.
- Helping any in re-entry with their immediate needs upon release such as food, clothing, and housing.
- Being involved in developing a better understanding of issues related to those with sex offenses.
- Reaching out to other churches to help them be Christ for those God sends their way.

The road will not be easy but it will truly be a blessing for all willing to make that journey. Thank you for considering it.

Broken Yoke Ministries
PO Box 5824
De Pere, WI 54115
Phone (262) 751-1128
www.BrokenYoke.org

Dining with Sinners



**The Church,
Sex Offenders,
and Reconciliation**

**A Responsible approach for
accepting ex-offenders into the
Christian Community**

THE ISSUE

Dear Pastor:

A person with sex-related offenses has just asked to join your church and you have some tough choices ahead of you.

Some in your congregation will be upset, even to the point of leaving the church if you choose to invite the individual to attend services. Now you wonder what God would have you do.

Jesus ate with sinners. Should you not invite this sinner to the Lord's Supper as well?

In this brochure, we hope to give you a few suggestions to help you deal with this situation. Remember: This person has come to this church knowing there will be censure and opposition in order to find the love of God. Can you, can any of us, deny it?

Still, you have a responsibility to the members of your church, so let's try to find a way to balance these needs.

CHRIST'S INVITATION

Having some initial procedures and ground rules set down will help the congregation get to know the individual and assure church members in the process.

Before attending regular services, we recommend spending some time with the individual and in perhaps much the same manner as you would with anyone applying for membership or church participation.

Suggest participating in a prayer group or Bible study with group members aware of the situation. You will need to spend some one-on-one time with this person establishing rapport. This might also mean meeting with a probation officer if required.

When those involved in the early stages of entry feel comfortable with steps already taken, establish ground rules for church participation.

There should be appropriate boundaries within the church itself and if appropriate, a church member can be assigned as an accountability aide to assist in the initial stages of church presence.

Appearances mean much, so care should be taken by the individual to avoid any hint of impropriety.

GROWING IN CHRIST

Instead of being a period of confusion and fear, the church can experience a time of growth in its faith. Loving others while in ignorance of their sins is one thing, but loving someone with a known sin is real growth. They will come to understand how God loves each of us despite our sins.

The church will also come to better understand how sin affects not only the victim of sexual assault but also the entire community. The foundation of this lesson is that God's love works through His sons and daughters, to forgive and heal.

Accountability is an act of love, not merely the weighty thumb of righteous oppression. Learning how to welcome those who might be unwelcome into the church not only strengthens our reliance on God but also our purpose as brothers and sisters in the Lord.