

Suggestions from our interviewees for how you can “Visit the Prisoner”:

You have now watched five compelling reflections on how some of your fellow Christians has answered Jesus’ call to visit the prisoner. Hopefully you are motivated to go and do likewise!

Here are some of the suggestions that were made during these interviews on possible paths to follow. Perhaps your path is somewhere on this list.

- Contact Arlette Zinck to explore ways to support The Ephesus Project and the Post Secondary Prison Education Foundation arlette.zinck@kingsu.ca
- Engage with M2W2 <https://www.m2w2.com/>
- Consider participating in reintegration mentorship. Mustard Seed runs a program of this sort as does the community parole office.
- Reach out to the Reintegration Chaplain at Mustard Seed Society for suggestions on how you or your parish can participate in and support the important work of reintegration. <https://theseed.ca/blog/you-dont-have-to-do-it-by-yourself>
- Volunteer with Circles of Support and Accountability <https://www.cosacanada.com/>
- Investigate and consider supporting or working with the John Howard or Elizabeth Fry Societies. <https://johnhoward.ca/> <https://www.efrynorthernalberta.com/>
- Become better informed and use that educated status to share with those around you and help nurture a hunger for restorative justice in Canada. One place to start is the annual report of the Correctional Investigator for Canada. <https://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/annrpt/annrpt20192020-eng.aspx>
- Advocate with your political leaders for more “corrections” and less “revenge” within Corrections Canada.
- Consult with your pastor or one of those we interviewed to identify a list of specific prisoners for whom you can pray. This is an important way to support those who are already doing work inside our prisons and to lift up those they are visiting.
- Listen for God’s “invitation” to be the guest of someone who is incarcerated - a rich relationship surely will follow.
- Begin with thinking differently about people in prison. See them through the eyes and with the heart of God. As you reframe your thoughts about justice and share your new thoughts with those around you, recognize that we can change the way justice is being pursued in our society.
- Consider and pray about this question: What is the objective of “justice”? Is justification being accomplished in our prisons?
- Investigate and learn about how the system works. Use this learning to cultivate compassion.
- Identify indicators of brokenness in the system and advocates for solutions to address this. (For example, reflect on how 45% of prison population in Alberta is Indigenous while only 5% of the general population is Indigenous. Why is that?)
- Consider how your home church can be a healthy and welcoming community for formerly incarcerated individuals. Build a community that is not afraid of those who are different. Build a community that does not judge, either overtly or indirectly through practices and expectations.
- Make contact with a prison chaplain and ask for their prayer list. Use it daily.
- Most prison chaplains are heavily dependent on volunteers to run their programs. If you're able and have skills that are relevant, volunteer.