

Date: 9/26/2018 12:27pm CDT
Subject: Baptism

(Wed - 9-19-2018) Just wanted to share a little about baptism in prison. Our Chapel recently received a great and needed donation from a local Illinois church. T- Shirts, shorts, towels and shower shoes. It is a wonderful blessing as 100% of everything within the work of the prison church is strictly from donations.

Our ministry is often like an emergency room in a hospital. It is a tragedy in a persons life and they are seeking answers and help. Most have big demons chasing them. Addictions, gangs, violence, mental instability. Most have committed some terrible act and those consequences are crashing down upon them. Each time we ask for a show of hands, 70-80 percent were raised in a Christian home or are of Christian faith.

In prison there is a very narrow window of opportunity to reach men with the Gospel, while they are paying attention. Granted, God will call many regardless of where they are physically. The younger men are most vulnerable to be distracted or lured into the criminal/prison lifestyle quickly. Often it is family members and churches on the outside that consistently reflect the love of Christ that help a person remain grounded and focused on Christ. We are simply a tool God has to use during the many months and years families, churches or other inmates are witnessing to these men.

Baptism is not taken lightly. It takes many months sometimes before we conduct a service, during which time the individual is in prayer, classes and mentoring by other believers. I have heard dozens of stories where a circle of Christians will conduct a baptism out of a sink in the housing unit, or using a bottle of water out on the yard. We can never limit God's Spirit and work that He chooses to use through each of us. These moments often remind me of life in a war zone.

I know there are many good church traditions, especially regarding infant baptism or full immersion baptism. The physical act is a tangible way for men to break away from strongholds. DL