

SEEKING PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAITHFUL CHURCHES



Our desire is to work with as many faithful churches as possible. By “faithful” we mean that they believe, teach, and live by the basic, historic Christian beliefs that are taught in scripture and affirmed by the Church through the centuries. Prison Fellowship’s Statement of Faith (below) and Board policies express the faith position of Prison Fellowship. Below is a summary of the essential beliefs we want to share in common with our partners.

ESSENTIAL BELIEFS (look for these concepts in your review)

1. There is only one God, the Creator and Lord of all. God is one God in three distinct Persons.
2. Jesus is the way (not “one way”) to right relationship with God. He lived a sinless life and died an atoning death to reconcile sinners to God, and he rose bodily from the dead. His victory over death is the source of our ultimate hope of eternal life.
3. The Holy Spirit draws people into salvation and truth. The Holy Spirit’s presence and work are expressed in a variety of ways.
4. Salvation and reconciliation with God are a gift of God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone.
5. The Church is the Body of Christ through which the Great Commission is carried out; it has many local expressions but they are all part of one Body through the Holy Spirit.
6. Scripture (Old and New Testaments) is uniquely given by God and is God’s Word with specific authority over matters of both faith and life for individual believers and the Church.
7. Jesus will return in glory as God brings history to its consummation; God’s people will be with him forever in the fullness of his glorious kingdom
8. We stand behind scripture’s teaching about the sanctity of marriage as the faithful relationship between one man and one woman, and that people are called to a lifestyle of celibacy outside of marriage.

WHY COMPATIBILITY MATTERS

Because Prison Fellowship entrusts the spiritual care of prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their families to churches who partner with us, we desire ministry partnerships with those who teach and live out a shared commitment to the essentials of the Christian faith.

DETERMINING COMPATIBILITY

As you recruit or assess potential partners for ministry, it is very important to look for evidence that the church is committed to these essentials in their stated beliefs, their teaching and preaching, and how the faith is lived out in their church life and outreach. Compatibility should be assessed any time a new church is recruited. In addition, when church leadership changes, be alert to any changes the new leader may bring in that could result in a change in compatibility.

HOW DO YOU FIND OUT?

1. The best way is personal contact with the local church—to discover first hand what they are all about. You can also share with them our Statement of Faith so that they can understand what PF is about
2. Review of the church’s website contents. Look for their stated beliefs, examples of the kinds of teaching the church offers and the content of that teaching, and indications of how the congregation or unit is living out its faith. Is it consistent with scripture’s teaching and a biblical worldview in areas such as sexual ethics?
3. Public statements of the pastor or leader (such as media interviews and publications).

WHAT IF YOU’RE NOT SURE?

If your initial assessment raises any “yellow flags”—either questions or concerns—please contact the Angel Tree Support Center at 800.55.ANGEL (26435) for guidance.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in one God, Creator and Lord of the Universe, the co-eternal Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ, God’s Son, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary atoning death on the cross, rose bodily from the dead and ascended to heaven where, as truly God and truly man, He is the only mediator between God and man.

We believe that the Bible is God’s authoritative and inspired Word. It is without error in all its teachings, including creation, history, its own origins, and salvation. Christians must submit to its divine authority, both individually and corporately, in all matters of belief and conduct, which is demonstrated by true righteous living.

We believe in the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. We also uphold the holy institution of marriage between one man and one woman, rooted as it is in God’s creation of man and woman in His image and in the relationship between Christ and His Church.

We believe that all people are lost sinners and cannot see the Kingdom of God except through the new birth. Justification is by grace through faith in Christ alone.

We believe in one holy, universal, and apostolic Church. Its calling is to worship God and witness concerning its Head, Jesus Christ, preaching the Gospel among all nations and demonstrating its commitment by compassionate service to the needs of human beings and promoting righteousness and justice.

We believe in the necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit for the individual’s new birth and growth to maturity, and for the Church’s constant renewal in truth, wisdom, faith, holiness, love, power, and mission.

We believe that Jesus Christ will personally and visibly return in glory to raise the dead and bring salvation and judgment to completion. God will fully manifest His kingdom when He establishes a new heaven and new earth, in which He will be glorified forever and exclude all evil, suffering, and death.