

THE THIRD PHASE: BUILDING TRUST.

The best word that describes building trust is TIME. It takes time to build trust especially with those who have been impacted by the Criminal Justice System. The ex-offender and his/her family come from an environment of crisis and survival, not one of nurturing and trust. **Therefore it is very important hat a nurturing relationship is built with those that you lead.**

STEP ONE – Until you launch your new work, invite your prospects for a cup of coffee or a soft drink at a local café or coffee shop. Talk about them, not you. Have them to tell you about their story and journey with Jesus. Ask them about their plans and purposes in life. Ask how you may pray for them in order to know their prayer requests. Remember that people will open up about the pains in their life as well as what they are passionate about in life. Schedule another time to meet with them.

STEP TWO – As soon as you launch your new work, invite all that you have been working with to the initial launch and continue to follow up on them. At this point others in your group should be building relationships with others as well. As you meet with the group, don't be afraid to share your struggles, questions, and victories. Many in the group will connect with you as they will have similar concerns.

STEP THREE – Do what you say you will do and never make promises that you cannot keep. You will be evaluated by your actions and not just your words. There will be challenges and issues that ex-offenders and their families have that only through prayer will God give direction and victory. Do what you can, but always turn to the Lord in prayer for everything. Showing up for a child's ballgame or event in their life is important. Remember, your presence means more than anything.

STEP FOUR – Serve one another in love. You have sensed God calling you to lead and start this group. You will do what is termed "ministry by interruption." Your life will be interrupted at various times because of a ministry need, and you must remember to always respond with the love of Christ. This means showing the love of Christ in holding others accountable, saying no, and serving Christ when you really don't feel like it. But whatever you do, always show the love of Christ.

STEP FIVE – When you begin to meet always have refreshments available. The best way to have people to become relax around you is to give them something to snack on or to drink. For men, holding a coffee cup or a soft drink immediately makes them feel at ease around other people. Ask others to help bring refreshments and eventually have everyone bring something for a pot luck supper. This increases trust and fellowship.

STEP SIX – As trust is being built, the Holy Spirit will lead you in sharing your journey with Christ with others. You will be led to invite a family over to have dinner and watch a movie, to take some to a ballgame, or to an event of some sort. Spending time with each other is essential. Be creative and listen to promptings or leanings of the Holy Spirit as He makes opportunities to build trust.