

PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER MANDATE:

In our judicial pursuit of punishing the guilty and protecting the innocent, three areas of difficulty arise concerning the incarceration of women with children:

- (1) the quality of care and training for the children
- (2) the need to strengthen the bonds between mothers and their children during incarceration
- (3) the transitioning needs of women when they are released from prison.

While the women clearly fall within the parameters of the guilty who need punishment, their children are just as clearly in the area of the innocent who need protection. The choices for their care are sometimes limited so that relatives or foster care may not be sufficient. Pharaoh's Daughter was founded to address those three needs, and our goals are to be a part of the solution in those three areas.

(1) We want to provide a safe environment for young children in order to nurture, educate, and care for them in a loving atmosphere.

(2) We want to make every effort to maintain a strong bond between mother and child through face to face contact, realizing that separation tends to strain or break bonds, making future reunion more difficult.

(3) We want to provide guidance, education, and mentoring to women who are released from prison. Our judicial system stresses that the guilty need not only punishment, but rehabilitation and preparation to re-enter society.

We, at Pharaoh's Daughter feel that there are three powerful reasons for our organization: God has mandated it, Jesus has commended it, and our community needs it.

Throughout scripture God gave special instructions, warnings, and promises of blessing for the fair and compassionate treatment of widows and the fatherless. He also shows his concern for those who are in prison or who are outcasts. When a mother is incarcerated, a unique situation is set into motion for her children. These children are not orphans (fatherless) in the strictest sense of the word, but are temporarily motherless and often bereft of fathers. These children are forced, by necessity, into situations that may be unacceptable. Therefore, in the spirit of God's commands, all scriptures referring to orphans are applicable to children of incarcerated mothers.

Repeatedly in the scriptures God stressed justice and care for the fatherless:

In Isaiah 1:17 we are admonished, **"...learn to do good, seek justice, correct oppression, bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause."**; Psalm 10:14 states **"You have been the helper of the fatherless..."** and continues in verses 17 & 18: **"O Lord, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed..."**; while Psalm 68:5 declares **"Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in His holy habitation."**

The needs of children without a mother would certainly be included in the exhortation of Isaiah 58: 6-8 ***"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen : to loose the chains of injustice...to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wandered with shelter – when you see the naked to clothe him...?"***

Jesus directly referred to the treatment of those in prison in His story found in Matthew 25:31-46. ***When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations...Then the King will say to those on His right, "Come... for I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me." Then... they will say, "Lord...when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?" And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it to Me."***

His commendation for those who visited and cared for prisoners tells us that whatever we do for them is also done for our Lord.

Those who care for children (whether biological parents or not) have a responsibility to teach and train those children in Godly principles. Ephesians 6:4 instructs us, “**Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.**” In this case, as those instructed to care for the fatherless, we can see the responsibility of teaching and training children who are in our care. Likewise, the words in Deuteronomy 4:9, 6:7, and 11:19, respectively, admonish us to “...**teach (these words) to your children...**” and, “**Impress (my commands) on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.**”

Just as the daughter of Pharaoh rescued and provided care for the infant Moses in Exodus 2, our three-fold purpose is to nurture, train, and provide for children entrusted to us, to assure face to face contact between mothers and their children as often as possible, and to assist the mothers on their release so that they may become good parents and gain understanding of their own needs as well as the needs of their children. Titus 2:4 is our guide: “**Older women...are to train younger women...to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind...**” As “older” women (not necessarily in years, but certainly in maturity) we are charged with the responsibility to teach the “younger” women; and also Deuteronomy 6:7 charges us to “

Our vision is to be sensitive to all the needs of women and children and thus fulfill the admonition of James 1:27 that says: “**Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this – to look after orphans and widows in their distress...**”