



Yellow Ribbon Committee Common Agenda

Yellow Ribbon Committees are held in a private place that enables confidentiality. For online meetings, individual members are responsible to ensure that the meeting is not overheard by securing the privacy of their room or using earphones or similar technology. The following is a common agenda for Champions outlining their role in preparing for, conducting, and following up with meetings of their Yellow Ribbon Committees.

PRE MEETING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Follow up with members on agreements from last meeting
- ☐ Prepare announcements
- ☐ Prepare meeting handouts
- ☐ Send meeting reminder to committee distribution email

PREAMBLE

Stephen's Table is a fellowship of ordinary citizens who have made the extraordinary commitment to stand in compassion with members of their hometown who are serving time in prison that the pain of incarceration might not break their bond with the community they share and that their homecoming might be a time of celebration and renewal and not desperation and divorce. By simple acts of human kindness through letter writing and visitation, members reignite hope in the hearts of those living in the shadow of the criminal justice system:

- Reminding them that they haven't been forgotten
- Helping them to make the most of their time in prison
- Assisting their loved ones who may be suffering in silence, and
- Supporting them during their transition home

The only requirement for membership is a desire to preserve the bond between prisoners and their hometown. Although Stephen's Table committees may be formed in religious, civic, and social organizations, it is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, or social agenda; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to be in relationship with members of our community who are serving time in prison and to create a support system for when they come home.

MEETING AGENDA

WELCOME (0:02)

The meeting should start on time with a short greeting from the facilitator: (1) recognizing any new members or guests (members introduce themselves as the first item of the agenda, (2) stating the purpose of the meeting, and (3) specifying anything specific goals that need to be achieved.

PREAMBLE (0:01)

Invite a member to read the above preamble.

SILENCE (0:02)

Observe two minutes of silence for those suffering in the shadow of the criminal justice system — offenders, victims, and loved ones.

BUSINESS (0:65)

1. Announcements (0:05)

New member and guest introductions, recognitions, news, information, and noteworthy items from the facilitator — with an invitation to the other members to add to the announcements as they see fit.

2. Match Activity (0:50)

Individual reports from each member of the committee noting: (1) the total number of people he or she is matched with, (2) the number of letters sent to each, (3) the number of letters received from each, (4) any visits made, (5) celebrations, concerns, discoveries, insights, etc., and (6) who, if anyone, is entering the last 6 months of incarceration and should be transitioned to Chattanooga Endeavors.

3. Open Discussion (0:10)

Tabled items from past meetings, reports, concerns, opportunities, etc. If a significant item is up for discussion, rather than prolonging the meeting or allocating time from other agenda items, a special meeting should be planned. This might be needed when planning a membership campaign, a special event, or a homecoming.

CLOSING (0:05)

1. Review agreements (0:01)
2. Meeting evaluation (0:03)
3. Next Meeting (0:01)

Committees meet every 4-6 weeks — ideally on the same day of the month and at the same time and place.

ADJOURN

ROUND RULES

1. Make everyone's minute count
2. Set aside distractions to be fully present
3. Make space for different perspectives and styles
4. Surface disagreements
5. Listen for understanding
6. Preserve the integrity of the adjourned meeting
7. Everyone has a learner's permit

POST MEETING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Submit meeting report
- ☐ Forward copy of report to committee distribution email
- ☐ Post reflections on Facebook Group