

## Church Planting

A church on a ship? Can you imagine? Why not? Seafarers spend 8-12 months living on the water. These are people who rarely, if ever, have an opportunity to visit a church on shore. When a seafarer comes to know Christ, he does not want to just visit a church, he wants to become the church with other believers. Church offers an opportunity to worship together, to grow in faith and to reach out to others. A young Christian seafarer said, "Through a church on board, we can grow in our faith in Christ, and our hope is renewed every time we come together."

Seaport Ministries across Florida are directly involved with Church Planting on the ships, especially the cruise ships. They provide training for leaders, Bibles in various languages, and Bible study materials. Many times, when a ship is docked, the Pastor leader will come to the seafarer's center looking for consultation and advice. Seaport Chaplains serves as mentors to many of the ships' pastors.



Each seafarer center has a schedule of services and Bible studies held on ships. When you walk into the Canaveral Port Ministry, the first sign you see is a listing of the *On-Board Crew Fellowships*. The Seaport Ministry attempts to connect the seafarer with an on-board church.

Pastoral leaders are seafarers who serve as a crew member. God has saved them and called them to minister where they are.

Since crew members days are long, worship services and Bible studies are held at 11:00 PM or later.

Congregations can be very transient since contracts last for 7-12 months. Many times, the seafarer will renew their contract, but they may be assigned to a different ship. Pastors try to stay with the same ship, but they are always preparing someone to take their place. Church planting on ships is unique but, also, very challenging.

Ways you can be involved...

1. Pray for these unique congregations! Get a list of the ships and the name of their Pastoral leader so you can pray specifically for them.
2. If you are going on a cruise, contact the Seaport Ministry. On-board Fellowships welcome visiting preachers and speakers. They would love for you to encourage them with a message from the word of God.

