

Creating a Positive Relationship with Prison Staff

Kairos Prison Ministry International

2021 Annual Conference July 13 – 17

Kairos works because we continue to seek and Find the Blessing.

- We put GOD first
- We give without expecting anything in return
- We Find the Blessing by making a difference in the lives of others
- The ministry is based on mutual Trust and Respect

The key to any relationship is **COMMUNICATION**

A **positive** relationship results when communication is based on

- Understanding
 - Trust
 - Respect
- ❖ Understanding occurs when there is two way communication and the needs on both sides of the relationship are identified
- ✓ The prison understands and agrees to the program requirements and expectations of Kairos
 - ✓ Kairos understands the requirements and expectations of the prison

❖ **The Prison Understanding:**

Assuming the Institutional Liaison is the main point of contact, he/she should -

1. Seek a meeting with the Warden or Chaplain or both as appropriate
2. Be knowledgeable about Kairos and organize your presentation prior to meeting with the Warden/Chaplain
3. Be brief and to the point
 - + Share the purpose of the ministry and its impact at other prisons
 - + Take him/her a Kairos Program Manual and briefly talk about how the manual is organized and an overview of its contents
 - + Highlight some of the major activities that impact the prison and security
 - Kairos Weekends (Inside or Torch)
 - Two Day Retreats
 - Monthly Reunions

- Weekly Prayer and Share
- Mentoring Program for Torch
- + Present the Memorandum of Understanding for the Warden's review and approval
- + Agree on the contact person for the prison and decide on the preferred form of communication – phone calls, email, texts, personal visits
- 4. Meet with Assistant Wardens who will have an impact on Kairos activities
 - + Provide each one with a program manual
 - + Review the schedule of Kairos activities for the year
 - + Answer questions

✧ **The Kairos Understanding:**

1. Obtain a copy and become familiar with the prison's policies and procedures
 - + Frequency of activities
 - + Dress code
 - + Reporting deadlines
 - + Required Department of Correction (DOC) training for volunteers
2. Obtain an organizational chart, if possible, and discuss prison organization and job responsibilities
3. Become familiar with the personnel who report to the Chaplain or Chapel Coordinator, if any, and whether paid or volunteer
 - + Duties and responsibilities
 - + Reporting/communication protocol – directly with copy to Chaplain or other designated person
4. Find out what schedules, lists or other documentation the prison requires prior to any Kairos activity and the required deadlines
 - + Determine space requirements and availability
 - + Identify items owned by the prison that will be used by Kairos (tables, chairs, etc.)
 - + Seek approval of inventory (food and equipment) to be brought in for activities
 - + Approval of team members for a Kairos weekend
 - + Approval of visitors attending the closing ceremony
 - + Review of program schedule
 - + Approval of times to enter and exit the prison
 - + Selection of participants for Kairos weekend
5. Provide the designated prison personnel the required documentation (schedules, list of volunteers, inventory, etc.) in a timely fashion
6. Determine how often the prison wants the volunteer data updated
7. Ensure all prison requirements are communicated to volunteers

- + As a part of their annual review of Operating Procedures, the Advisory Council should include a review of the prison policies and procedures, including dress code, documentation schedule, and special requests
- + Team Training for each Kairos Weekend should include a brief discussion of prison policy that includes the dress code, volunteer behavior while in the facility and contact with the residents
- + As an ongoing process volunteers should be reminded about:
 - Institutional dress code
 - Being present and punctual for all activities at the prison

8. Determine how problems that may arise are to be handled

- + The Liaison reports the issue/s to the Chaplain or the designated prison contact
- + Chaplain/contact person handles or determines who else needs to be involved
- + Discussions are held and resolution is reached
- + Determine in advance the appropriate method of dismissing any resident whose behavior is inappropriate and/or disruptive

9. Youth facilities will be treated in a similar manner as an adult prison with the following exceptions:

- + Volunteers commit to serve as mentors to the participating residents following the weekend
- + Wrap around services must be established for each participant
- + Life skills and a life plan are established for each youth participant in cooperation with the appropriate staff members
- + Systematic reporting is conducted by the volunteers and submitted to the designated staff members on the progress of each participant

❖ Relationships are built on **Trust**, a firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of Kairos

- We are guests in the Warden's house
- Be mindful of the rules and don't break any of them, no matter how small or unimportant you may think a rule or policy is
- Make certain the volunteers are properly prepared to conduct a Kairos weekend and all other subsequent Kairos activities
- Most prison administrations and Kairos Advisory Councils want one point of contact and that is the Institutional Liaison, make sure all communication to and from the prison goes through him or her
- Any schedule changes or other issues communicated *to* the prison must have approval from the Advisory Council. Any changes or other issues *from* the prison must be communicated to the Advisory Council by the Institutional Liaison

- In the case of unexpected, catastrophic events like COVID-19, communicate with the appropriate prison personnel for the latest updates on reentry and their requirements
 - Keep confidential matters and information confidential
 - Own your mistakes
- ❖ **Respect** for the relationship requires that we pay attention to rules/policies, rights/expectations or traditions of the prison
- Humility wins the day and expressing appreciation is icing on the cake
 - Always be respectful, and courteous to everyone
 - Always address personnel by their title: Warden, Assistant Warden, Officer, Chaplain, etc.
 - Being argumentative, confrontational and rude will put a bad light on the ministry and get you no where
 - Security is a priority for both the prison and Kairos, obey the rules
 - Be cautious when listening to their stories that the conversation does not cross the line into a confession
 - Never wonder away from the group and make sure you are never alone with an inmate
 - Make it a practice to know who's in charge of Security and/or the person who can handle unforeseen issues that may arise, especially on the Kairos Weekend
 - Be proactive, offer assistance and recognize that Kairos is not the only volunteer organization at the prison
 - Manage your boundaries, be mindful not to "cross the line"

*We will make it our mission to **FIND**
THE BLESSING*