

Reunion Ideas for Kairos Outside

Below are topics former Kairos Outside Guests have suggested would be useful to discuss at your Reunions during your sharing time. These are topics the ladies indicate they struggle with in their daily lives.

Instructions:

Please select a volunteer who can give a 5-minute presentation/talk on the issue, sharing their personal testimony about the topic. Please ask them to be open and honest. Ask them to discuss how they have coped or are coping with the situation if applicable. If they have children or grandchildren, they can also talk about the impact of these issues on the children.

Following the 5-minute talk break the group into small groups for discussion and prayer time.

These exercises should be completed in approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour including the talk.

Topic 1 - Safety

Women who have incarcerated loved ones or friends often worry about the safety of their loved ones or friends as they are serving their time. Sometimes women don't know where their loved one or friends are, and they don't hear from them for long periods of time. All these situations cause the ladies great concern, anxiety, and stress.

The ladies at your reunion who have children also need to know how they can help their children cope with this situation. Please discuss what you have done to help your children or grandchildren cope with this issue, if applicable. If not applicable, please encourage the discussion groups to discuss strategies for how children or grandchildren are coping with this issue if it applies to them.

Discussion Questions:

- Is this a fear, concern, struggle or situation you have experienced? or What emotions or issues do struggle with in this area?
- Why or what makes this a fear, a concern or a struggle?
- What can you do to overcome this fear, concern or struggle? *Or* What have you done in the past to overcome this fear, concern or struggle?
- How do you think others can support you regarding this fear, concern or struggle?

Scriptures to read and use now and in your daily prayer time:

Psalm 91:1-2, Psalm 27:1, 2 Thessalonians 3:3, and Psalm 46:1

Prayer points – pray as a group, and then continue to pray individually:

- Pray that God will place a hedge of protection around your loved one or friend
- Pray that God will give you peace and comfort you when you experience this fear, concern or struggle
- Pray that God will bring people into your life to support you; people who may be experiencing this same fear or concern
- Pray that God will give you the ability to discuss this fear or concern with someone you trust, someone who will support you, and someone who will pray for you in this area of your life

Topic 2 – Leaving loved ones or friends after visiting with them

It is often very hard for the ladies to leave their loved ones or friends after they visit with them. They can experience many emotions surrounding visitation with their loved ones. For many, this can be a joyous time, but it can also be a time of strife and struggle. Perhaps their visit did not go as planned, or they had issues with the staff of the institution or with their loved one or friend. Visits also present logistical and other issues for the ladies.

The ladies at your reunion who have children also need to know how they can help their children cope with this situation. Please discuss what you have done to help your children or grandchildren cope with this issue, if applicable. If not applicable, please encourage the discussion groups to discuss strategies for how children or grandchildren are coping with this issue if it applies to them.

Discussion Questions:

- Is this a fear, concern or struggle you have experienced or What emotions or issues do you struggle?
- Why or what makes it a fear, a concern or a struggle?
- What can you do to overcome this fear, concern or struggle? *Or* What have you done in the past to overcome this fear, concern or struggle?
- How do you think others can support you regarding this fear, concern or struggle?

Scriptures to read and use now and in your daily prayer time:

Deuteronomy 31:6, Psalm 91:15, Matthew 28:20

Prayer points – pray as group, and then continue to pray individually:

- Pray that God will be with you during visitations, pray that God will join you in that time, and that you and your loved one will be able to visit without outside interference or other causing issues
- Pray that God will give you peace and comfort you when you experience this fear, concern or struggle in this area
- Pray that God will bring people into your life to support you, people who may be experiencing this same fear or concern

- Pray that God will give you the ability to discuss this fear or concern with someone you trust, someone who will support you, and someone who will pray for you in this area of your life

Topic 3 – Loved one or friend is not around to deal with daily decisions, daily struggles, and other issues surrounding the absence of the incarcerated person in their life.

It is very difficult not to have your loved one or friend at home to deal with daily decisions and struggles or issues that come up. Also, it is hard during holidays or when special events are taking place to overcome the sense of loss felt because your loved one or friend is missing and cannot be present.

The ladies at your reunion who have children also need to know how they can help their children cope with this situation. Please discuss what you have done to help your children or grandchildren cope with this issue, if applicable. If not applicable, please encourage the discussion groups to discuss strategies for how children or grandchildren are coping with this issue if it applies to them.

Discussion Questions:

- Is this a fear, concern or struggle you have experienced or What emotions or issues do you struggle with in this area?
- Why or what makes it a fear, a concern or a struggle?
- What can you do to overcome this fear, concern or struggle? *Or* What have you done in the past to overcome this fear, concern or struggle?
- How do you think others can support you regarding this fear, concern or struggle?

Scriptures to read and use now and in your daily prayer time:

Psalms 18:2, Proverbs 3: 5-6, 1 Peter 5:7, Isaiah 41:10

Prayer points – pray as a group, and then continue to pray individually:

- Pray that God will be with you during visitations, pray that God will join you in that time, and that you and your loved one will be able to visit without outside interference or other related issues
- Pray that God will give you peace and comfort you when you experience this fear, concern or struggle
- Pray that God will bring people into your life to support you, people who may be experiencing this same fear or concern
- Pray that God will give you the ability to discuss this fear or concern with someone you trust, someone who will support you, and someone who will pray for you in this area of your life

Topic 4 – Communication

Maintaining a relationship with someone who is incarcerated is very difficult. Communication is key. Many factors can hinder communication with incarcerated loved ones and friends. Phone calls are expensive, mail delivery can take a long time or be disrupted. Visitation times may not be convenient etc.

The ladies at your reunion who have children also need to know how they can help their children cope with this situation. Please discuss what you have done to help your children or grandchildren cope with this issue, if applicable. If not applicable, please encourage the discussion groups to discuss strategies for how children or grandchildren are coping with this issue if it applies to them.

Discussion Questions:

- Is this a fear, concern or struggle you have experienced or What emotions or issues do you struggle with in this area?
- Why or what makes it a fear, a concern or a struggle?
- What can you do to overcome this fear, concern or struggle? *Or* What have you done in the past to overcome this fear, concern or struggle?
- How do you think others can support you regarding this fear, concern or struggle?

Scriptures to read and use now and in your daily prayer time:

Psalms 19:14, Proverbs 25:11, Matthew 12:37, Philippians 4:8, Ephesians 4:29, John 13:34

Prayer points – pray as a group, and then continue to pray individually:

- Pray that God will be with you as you write letters, pray that God will join you in the time you have on the phone, and that you and your loved one will be able to communicate openly and honestly with each other
- Pray that God will help you to maintain your relationship, and that your relationship will be God honoring
- Pray that God will give you peace and comfort you when you experience this fear, concern or struggle
- Pray that God will bring people into your life to support you, people who may be experiencing this same fear or concern
- Pray that God will give you the ability to discuss this fear or concern with someone you trust, someone who will support you, and someone who will pray for you in this area of your life

Topic 5 – Financial Issues

When someone is incarcerated, often the household income is cut in half. The ladies are left to pay the bills and keep their household up and running. But, their incarcerated loved ones or

friend also expects that they will put money on their books, send packages, come for visitation etc. These things put additional financial pressure on the family/friends.

Discussion Questions:

- Is this a fear, concern or struggle you have experienced or What emotions or issues do struggle with in this area?
- Why or what makes it a fear, a concern or a struggle?
- What can you do to overcome this fear, concern or struggle? *Or* What have you done in the past to overcome this fear, concern or struggle?
- How do you think others can support you regarding this fear, concern or struggle?

Scriptures to read and use now and in your daily prayer time:

James 1:17, Colossians 3:23-24, Proverbs 3:9

Prayer points – pray as a group, and then continue to pray individually:

- Pray that God will help you with your finances, that he will help your loved one to understand the limitations of your budget
- Pray that God will help you to be good stewards of your finances, and that He will help you in every area where you have a financial need
- Pray that God will give you peace and comfort you when you experience this fear, concern or struggle
- Pray that God will bring people into your life to support you; people who may be experiencing this same fear or concern
- Pray that God will give you the ability to discuss this fear or concern with someone you trust, someone who will support you, and someone who will pray for you in this area of your life

Topic 6 – Shame & Guilt

Women who have incarcerated loved ones or friends often feel shame and/or guilt. They are ashamed about the actions of their loved ones or friends. They may also feel some guilt or responsibility about the situation or circumstances. Sometimes the actions of their loved ones or friends, or information about what he/she did has been publicized in the newspaper or heralded in the news. They feel as though everyone knows the what their loved one or friend did. They may be racked by “If only” or “Things would have been different if I had only...” . All these things may cause them feelings of guilt and shame. Additionally, they are belittled by Correctional Officers when they go to visit, and they have often been rejected by other family member, their friends, their church, their community or all these due to their situation. Their feelings of shame and guilt are overwhelming, and often lead them to isolate themselves so they won't have to feel or deal with them.

The ladies at your reunion who have children also need to know how they can help their children cope with this situation. Please discuss what you have done to help your children or grandchildren cope with this issue, if applicable. If not applicable, please encourage the

discussion groups to discuss strategies for how children or grandchildren are coping with this issue if it applies to them.

Discussion Questions:

- Is this an emotion, fear, concern or struggle you have experienced? or What emotions or issues do struggle with in this area?
- Why or what makes this a fear, a concern or a struggle?
- What can you do to overcome this fear, concern or struggle? *Or* What have you done in the past to overcome this fear, concern or struggle?
- How do you think others can support you regarding this emotion, fear, concern or struggle?

Scriptures to read and use now and in your daily prayer time:

- Psalm 3:3
- 1 Peter 4:16
- Philippians 4:13
- Luke 22:32

Prayer points – pray as a group, and then continue to pray individually:

- Pray that God will set aside your feelings of shame and/or guilt
- Pray that He will remind whenever you feel guilt or shame that you are not responsible for the choices made by your loved one or friend who is incarcerated or anyone else in your life
- Pray that God will remind you of who you are in Him by recalling His promises found in scripture to your mind when you become overwhelmed by shame and guilt
- Pray that God will give you peace and comfort you when you experience this fear, concern or struggle
- Pray that God will bring people into your life to support you; people who may be experiencing this same fear or concern who will minister to you, and help deal with your concern or struggle in this area
- Pray that God will give you wisdom and direction about how to help your children if they are suffering from these same feelings

Topic 7 – How to Respond in Love When People Ask Difficult Questions

When people learn someone has been incarcerated they immediately want to know why, and immediately have questions. They will ask the incarcerated person's loved ones and/or friends difficult questions, like what did they do, how long will they be in jail/prison, and are you going to continue to support him or her... all the questions we don't ask Kairos Outside Guests.

Responding when people ask these difficult questions is hard for most loved ones and friends of incarcerated persons. They often feel obligated to answer the questions, even if they don't want to. The questions are painful to answer, remind them of their circumstances, and bring out emotions within them that they may not be prepared to deal with at the time.

So, how can we help them to respond to those difficult and uncomfortable questions, in love?

Also, if you members of your audience have children you may want to mention that children may often be asked uncomfortable questions as well. It is important the women think about how to prepare their children to handle these questions when they come.

Discussion Questions:

- Is this an emotion, fear, concern, struggle or situation you have experienced? or What emotions or issues do struggle with in this area?
- Why or what makes this a fear, a concern or a struggle?
- What can you do to overcome this fear, concern or struggle? *Or* What have you done in the past to overcome this fear, concern or struggle?
- How do you think others can support you regarding this fear, concern or struggle?

Scriptures to read and use now and in your daily prayer time:

- Ephesians 4:15
- Proverbs 15:1
- Colossians 4:6

Prayer points – pray as a group, and then continue to pray individually:

- Pray that God will give you the proper response when people ask you difficult questions
- Pray that God will give you an opportunity to share with the people who are asking the difficult questions how this situation makes you feel, so they will become more aware and sensitive to what you and others in the same situation are going through
- Pray that God will give you peace and comfort you when you experience this fear, concern or struggle
- Pray that God will bring people into your life to support you; people who may be experiencing this same fear, concern or situation who will minister to you, and help deal with your concern or struggle in this area
- Pray for any children in the family who may be facing difficult questions
- Pray for the right words to talk with your child/children about their questions

Topic 8 – Loneliness

Loneliness is a common problem for those left behind when someone is incarcerated. Learning how to deal with the “loss” of you loved one or friend due to incarceration is difficult, and the loneliness it causes is something women who have incarcerated loved ones or friends live with every day. When someone is incarcerated it affects every part of their family, spouse or girlfriend or friend’s life and learning to live without the other person is not only challenging, but often causes great loneliness for those left behind.

The ladies at your reunion who have children also need to know how they can help their children cope with this situation. Please discuss what you have done to help your children or grandchildren cope with this issue, if applicable. If not applicable, please encourage the

discussion groups to discuss strategies for how children or grandchildren are coping with this issue if it applies to them.

Discussion Questions:

- Is this an emotion, concern, struggle or situation you have experienced? or What emotions or issues do struggle with in this area?
- Why or what makes this a fear, a concern or a struggle?
- What can you do to overcome this emotion, fear, concern or struggle? *Or* What have you done in the past to overcome this emotion, fear, concern or struggle?
- How do you think others can support you regarding this emotion, fear, concern or struggle?

Scriptures to read and use now and in your daily prayer time:

- Psalm 23
- Deuteronomy 31:6
- Romans 8:38-39
- 1 Peter 5:7
- Psalm 68:5-6

Prayer points – pray as a group, and then continue to pray individually:

- Pray that God will fill you with His presence when you feel lonely
- Pray that God will provide ways for you to overcome loneliness, that He will give you opportunities to serve others, and/or places and people you can go to when loneliness overcomes you.
- Pray that God will give you peace and comfort you when you experience this fear, concern or struggle
- Pray that God will bring people into your life to support you; people who may be experiencing this same fear, concern or situation who will minister to you, and help deal with your concern or struggle in this area
- Pray that God will give you wisdom and direction as you help your child/children deal with loneliness

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