



Kairos Outside Kitchen Team Devotional Guide



Kairos Prison Ministry International, Inc.

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**Kairos Prison Ministry
International, Inc.**

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How to Use This Guide

The Kairos Outside Kitchen Team Devotional Guide was created to assist Kitchen Teams who are unable to prepare food for the Kairos Outside Weekend.

The Kitchen team is a main source of prayer support for the team. The team depends on the Kitchen team not just to prepare them for and follow up after speaking, but for prayer on the whole process as well as any concerns that are brought to the team.

The devotional guide follows the flow of the Weekend. You can use as much or as little as you want depending on what you have time to do.

The team can take turns leading these times or one person can lead them all. The focus here is on prayer and walking with God.

Each entry will have the same format: thoughts, action, questions, prayer. If any of these have to be cut, please cut anything but prayer.

Thank you for answering the call to serve on this Kairos Outside team. Your presence as well as your presents will be an enormous blessing to both the guests and team and they will be a blessing to you.

[illegible]

Friday After Setup

You've set your stuff up in the dining area, you've helped unpack and organize other areas, and your bed is set and ready to go. So what now?

It is easy to minimize one's role when looking at all of what we call the core documents. However, read 1 Corinthians 12:12:

"A person has only one body, but it has many parts. Yes, there are many parts, but all those parts are still just one body. Christ is like that too."

Think about your baby toe. It is often stubbed and many times people wonder why its even there. However, without your baby toe, you would not be able to correctly balance yourself. Sure, your body would get used to it after a while, but you would never be able to perform as optimally as you would if you had it.

There is no job that is bigger than any other job. Your challenge is to follow Colossians 3:17: "Everything you say and everything you do should be done for Jesus your Lord. And in all you do, give thanks to God the Father through Jesus."

Let's take this time to review the reasons we're here. Read through the Kairos Vision, Mission Statement, Statement of Faith, Core Values, and Kairos Outside purpose and goals and pray over each part that God would help everyone to be on the same page and there would be unity. And ultimately that God's will be done.

Vision

A Community Spiritually Freed
From the Effects of
Imprisonment Reaching all
Impacted by Incarceration,
Through the Love, Hope, and
Faith Found in Jesus Christ.

Kairos Mission Statement

The Mission of Kairos Prison
Ministry International, Inc., is
to share the transforming love
and forgiveness of Jesus
Christ to impact the hearts
and lives of incarcerated men,
women, and youth, as well as
their families, to become
loving and productive
citizens of their communities.

Kairos Statement of Faith



The people of Kairos are called by God to share the love of Christ with those impacted by incarceration. Kairos encourages believers from a variety of Christian traditions to be volunteers in this Christ-filled ministry.

Kairos programs offer to prison residents, their families, and those who work with them, the opportunity to receive God's forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ, and to grow in their faith and servanthood in Christian community.

We stand on the common ground of the following elements of faith.

We in Kairos believe:

- ◇ The Bible is God's authoritative and inspired word for our faith and our lives.
- ◇ In the Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- ◇ In the deity, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- ◇ Friendship with God is a free gift, for God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.
- ◇ The love of Jesus Christ motivates His followers to provide food for the hungry, drink to the thirsty, welcome to the stranger, clothes for the naked, and visits to the sick and those in prison.
- ◇ In sharing the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ with all incarcerated individuals, their families, and to those who work with them inside and outside the correctional institution.

[illegible]

The Purpose of Kairos Outside

The purpose of Kairos Outside is to demonstrate God's grace and love through Christian support for women who have relatives/friends who are or who have been incarcerated, and to former residents of correctional institutions who did not have the opportunity to attend a Kairos Inside Weekend while they were incarcerated.

The Goals of Kairos Outside

To provide a safe place;

To offer unconditional love and acceptance in a Christian setting;

To encourage the sharing of life's journey;

To foster spiritual growth;

To promote participation in support groups;

To create an opportunity for a relationship with God.

[illegible]

[illegible]

What about these “core documents” stands out to you?

How can you help ensure these are all followed?

Specific prayer requests:

[illegible]

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

Wrapping Up the Weekend & Closing

Thoughts & favorite moments:

[illegible]

Friday After Afternoon Team Meeting

The first team meeting of the Weekend is over and now there are some specifics to be prayed for. List the requests that have come out of the afternoon team meeting:

[illegible]

As you pray now, read over the Kairos Outside Symbol and remind yourself of some of the situations these ladies have been through. The fear and hurt they are bringing. The isolation they have felt. The shame and guilt they have experienced. The anger that has overcome them. The struggle to forgive. And their desperate need for a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

The silhouette of the woman looks into the prison with bars.

The Kairos Outside symbol was developed out of stories from a Kairos Outside volunteer and what she actually experienced on her Kairos Outside Weekend. The symbol was designed by a graphic artist friend of an early volunteer. The logo was designed in keeping with the woman's Kairos Outside Weekend experiences. The woman shared about the desire to connect the inside and the outside with love as the container. The heart, that container, depicts God's love with the male and female silhouettes found there. It unites the inside (prison with bars) and the outside (darkness and unseen bars). It shows women doing time right along with those inside.

This is an important part of the Weekend as it helps the guests have closure. That is something they don't always get with their loved one. What are some prayers you have for this time?

This image shows a single page from a notebook or ledger. It features ten evenly spaced horizontal black lines across its entire width. The lines are parallel and extend from the left edge to the right edge of the page. There is no handwriting, printed text, or other markings on the paper.

How to Stay Involved

_____ (speaker's name) is currently giving the "How to Stay Involved" talk. Please read the talking points as a group and as you read them, pray for the speaker to be clear and guests to be receptive.

Here are the main talking points for the "How to Stay Involved" talk:

There are several ways to stay involved with Kairos Outside to maintain the connection that starts with the Weekend.

1. Attend Reunions that take place several times a year
2. Join a Support Group where you can get to know each other. Grouping can include meeting for coffee, meeting for lunch, sharing your lives as you stand in line for visiting.
3. Angel on a future Weekend. Come for a few hours and work in the background in a variety of ways. It's the best opportunity to give back some of what you received on your Weekend.
4. Submit a Team Application. Get a chance to see the Weekend from the other side.
5. Invite others to share the gift you have just received.

Following these talks, the speakers stay at the podium and take questions from the guests regarding both topics.

Pray that the guests will take this opportunity to reflect and ask questions that are heavy on their hearts. This can help the wrap around process of Kairos Inside, Kairos Torch, and Kairos Outside.

Friday After Dinner

You've possibly had your first chance to hear the guests and team interact, even if behind the scenes. They are getting ready to officially meet each other and the leader will make this comment:

Would it set your mind at ease to know that we have not invited you here to change you in any way? As we go through the Weekend, you may decide that you want or need to make some changes in your life. If you do, we'll be here to support and encourage you. One thing is for sure: We, as team members, will change as we include you in our lives.

Whether they realize it or not, each guest is here for God's Special Time known as Kairos. A myriad of events brought them here for them to have an encounter planned before the beginning of time by God Himself!



How would you feel if you were in the guest's shoes?

What can you do to make the guests feel more comfortable?

Specific prayer requests:

When They Come Home

_____ (speaker's name) is currently giving the "When They Come Home" talk. Please read the talking points as a group and as you read them, pray for the speaker to be clear and guests to be receptive.

Here are the main talking points for the "When They Come Home" talk:

1. What are the expectations of everyone?
2. How to divide responsibility.
3. Giving one another space and time.
4. First experiences: • Shopping • Eating out • Movies • Going to the park, ocean, forest, river, etc. • Simple pleasures
5. Adjustments made. The speaker should talk about how the reality may not match the expectations that they held and how they deal with it.
6. Suggestions on how to have a smooth, as possible, transition.



Prodigal Daughter & Choices

OR

You have now prayed in speakers for the first talk and meditation of the Weekend. This is one of your most important functions of the Weekend. Below are the talking points for the “Prodigal Daughter” meditation and “Choices” talk. Read these as a group and as you read them, pray for the speaker to be clear and guests to be receptive.

Here are the main talking points for the “Prodigal Daughter” meditation:

- Jesus used parables to teach us and give us insight into God's nature. We learn about God's feeling in regard to our sinfulness in one parable in particular: The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). The parable should be paraphrased for this Weekend as "The Prodigal Daughter." No matter which version is told, the parable is really misnamed--it is actually about the loving and forgiving parent. To demonstrate the greatness of God's mercy, Jesus shows us by contrast the usual human reaction of the sinner. The older daughter represents those we call "good." She reacts the way even "good" human beings tend to react: she refuses to forgive. She is jealous and bitter about her mother's mercy. It is evident that her devotion to her mother has been motivated, in part at least, by self-interest. Because she is human, she cannot easily forgive and forget the choices of her younger sister.

- Then the story is shared, using an example from the speaker's life, so that Guests will identify with it as their story, since it is everyone's story. That identification might be from the perspective of the parent, the older sister or the Prodigal Daughter. During rebellious periods of our life, we can become self-centered and miserable and choose to cut ourselves off from friends and family. The first step back is not easy...the first step requires us to be humble enough to acknowledge the state of our lives. The second step is to reach out to those who love us.
- Like the parable, we have loved ones around us who are waiting to welcome us home, just as God does. We have loved ones that we would welcome home, also. God is waiting for the first sign from us that we want to return. God wants to make our return easy. God comes to meet us. God wants to rid us of our burdens. God wants us to share in an unending celebration of peace and joy. All we have to do is be willing to return to God's loving, open arms.

Here are the main talking points for the "Choices" talk:

- God's love is unconditional. Although we sometimes turn away, it is always there. God has made each of us, and "God don't make no junk!" We are all good, we all have value, we are all unique AND God has given us all the minds and the free will to reason and make Choices.
- We all have value/talents/gifts, whether anyone has affirmed them or not. Examples of gifts: cooking, typing, cleaning, smiling, loving, singing, playing sports, etc. Have your gifts been discovered? How have you chosen to use your gifts in your life or share them with others?

How have you experienced Christian community this Weekend? How can you pass this community spirit on to your environments?

Where are you going to get support for yourself and your loved ones? Do you feel the need for that support in your life? If so, what will you do to get regular support?

support us. We can be the women who can support others. The choice before us is to continue to be isolated or to become a part of a community.

4. My group helps me to persevere.



- Examples of positive and negative messages: love and hatred/anger/abuse, inclusion and rejection, smiles and frowns, etc., with examples of the responses/choices for the messages. Some messages are believable some are not. Some Choices are actions (in situations where we have some control) others are reactions (in situations where we have no control). The Choices we make can result in the use, misuse or non-use of our gifts/talents.
- We all need to go off by ourselves and think at times. We need especially to think about ourselves: Who are we, how we feel, who and what is important to us? The Choices we have made, where they have taken us and whether we wish to change some of that. We also need to think about the Choices we will make in the future and the direction we wish our lives to go.



What are the positive choices that you have made in your life that have brought you peace and happiness?

What are the negative choices in your life that you would change if you could?

What choices or changes would you make in your life to make yourself a happier person mentally, emotionally, spiritually?

Specific prayer requests:

Perseverance Through Christian Community

_____ (speaker's name) is currently giving the "Perseverance Through Christian Community" talk. Please read the talking points as a group and as you read them, pray for the speaker to be clear and guests to be receptive.

Here are the main talking points for the "Perseverance Through Christian Community" talk:

1. You have been called by God to attend this Weekend. Your feelings of love, happiness and security have come from: God's graces; your quiet meditations and conversations with God; your prayers and the prayers of others and the support of other Christians, the kitchen crew, the Team, your loving Table Family and the entire Christian community.
2. We have become a Christian community this Weekend. We, as active participants, together can keep this experience alive! The Christian community plays a fundamental role in the life of any Christian through trust, confidentiality, support and accountability.
3. The real world has not changed much since this Weekend began, but you may have. When you return to the 'real' world, real problems and seemingly hostile environments, you must reinforce the strength you are feeling now. How do you do it? The same way we did this Weekend: sharing, prayer, God's graces and the mutual support of your Christian community. We need to find women who understand our situation and can

The next part of the Weekend will depend on what talks were chosen. There will either be a talk on:

**Perseverance
through
Christian
Community**

Or a panel talking about:

**When They Come Home
&
How to Stay Involved**

**Evening Team
Meeting Notes**

Friday After

Tonight is your early bedtime night. Spend some time talking about the praises of today. What God things did you see or hear about?

Father God, we thank you for the blessing of today. We thank you for the opportunity to serve you and be your hands and feet. Thank you for each person who said yes to being on team and each who said yes to being a guest on this Weekend. We pray for each person, that they would rest well and awake rejuvenated. We ask that any distractions or concerns be taken from their mind and handed over to you. We ask for wisdom as Weekend leadership place guests into table families and lead the Weekend. May we all show You to our guests and only use words if needed. In all things, we will praise You. Amen.

[illegible]

[illegible]

NOTES:

Relationships

_____ (speaker's name) is currently giving the "Relationships" talk. Please read the talking points as a group and as you read them, pray for the speaker to be clear and guests to be receptive.

Here are the main talking points for the "Relationships" talk:

1. We all have many relationships in our life: spouses, parents, siblings, friends and our God.
2. We relate not only by what we say but also by our actions and reactions. Open communication is essential in any relationship.
3. A deep relationship with someone can be both frustrating and satisfying.
4. Maintaining a relationship with someone inside presents unique and special challenges for both people. Examples: decision-making, financial burdens, trust, issues surrounding children. God can be a part of the relationship and the main link between 2 people who are separated.

Immediately following this talk, the special letters are handed out. This can be a time of celebration, mourning, anger, and a myriad of other emotions.

Pray for the guests, that their hearts will be prepared for whatever is in their special letter. Pray that the team will be prepared to respond as needed to the guests and that the team would be intuitive to the needs of the guests.



Following this talk is a series of questions:

1. Children are a big part of most of our environments.
How have you handled the problems of your children,
whether they are incarcerated or children or siblings of
someone who is incarcerated?

2. How have the siblings of the incarcerated been affected
by the choices of others?

3. Where are your gifts needed the most in your home
environment?

Saturday Morning

This morning starts the day that seems like a week. Let's start
out the morning right.

Our Lord. We thank you for another opportunity to serve You and
make a difference in the life of others. We thank You for all the
ways You have provided for us. Please help us to stay focused
on You today and may Your will be done. Amen.

The best way to start the day is to think about what all needs to
be done that day. So let's see:

- Kitchen Team Introduction
- Skits at meal time
- Serving food
- Cleaning up after meals
- Preparing for and attending elegant dinner
- Walking in Love/Agape Service/Thanksgiving Service

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what will come this day and
how to approach it.

What are you most excited about today?



What concerns do you have about today?

How can you overcome those concerns?

Specific prayer requests:

Home Environment

_____ (speaker's name) is currently giving the "Home Environment" talk. Please read the talking points as a group and as you read them, pray for the speaker to be clear and guests to be receptive.

Here are the main talking points for the "Home Environment" talk:

1. Each of us has children in our environments. Some of the children of those who are incarcerated are angry and hurt.
2. You have to deal with the "acting out" of your children because of choices you may not have made.

THOUGHTS:

- 1) Siblings of the incarcerated may be struggling and need the love of Christ to help in their healing.
- 2) How do we address the challenges of sharing the love we have experienced on this Weekend to those in our home environment?



I Am Worthy

_____ (speaker's name) is currently giving the "I Am Worthy" meditation. Just as you did for the other two, read these as a group and as you read them, pray for the speaker to be clear and guests to be receptive.

- "Aren't five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one sparrow is forgotten by God. Even the hairs of your head have been counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth much more than many sparrows! (Luke 12:6-7)."
- We all make poor choices. We have to ask God to help us accept again the new life in Christ which enables us to live without despair and without pride. This leads us to know with joy that we are accepted as wonderful and whole human beings. We mirror God's action toward us when we acknowledge our inner goodness and ourselves. What God says to us in the privacy of our hearts about our value is what we must say about ourselves.
- Self-acceptance also means acceptance of all our parts, even those that are not complete but still are graced. We need to take responsibility for our actions, whether they impact positively or negatively. When we are honest with ourselves, we may be surprised to find that we have many more good qualities than bad. When was the last time we thought about our good qualities, the special gifts that not everyone else has?

- We need to believe God knows us and loves us--faults and all. We no longer have to build walls of fear to protect ourselves from others. God promises not to give up on us, to bring good--even out of our mistakes and to help us grow.

Do you believe you are worthy of God's love and acceptance? Why or why not?

How do you know you are worthy of God's love and acceptance?



What concerns do you have about today?

How can you overcome those concerns?

Specific prayer requests:

Sunday Morning

The last morning! You made it! I know it's early and you're tired, but let's start the day with our Lord.

Heavenly Father. Thank You for today and for all you have already done this Weekend. Thank you for keeping us safe and getting us through yesterday. Please help us keep our energy up and speak to each other in love. May Your will be done. Amen.

Here's today's to-do list:

- Flowers at Dawn
- Skit at Breakfast
- Serving food
- Cleaning up after meals
- Pack and Inventory Supplies
- Clean up at the end of the Weekend

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what will come this day and how to approach it.

What are you most excited about today?

Table Family Assignments

At this point, the Weekend leader is discussing and placing guests into table families. Take a moment to pray for each table family. That they would bond as a unit and feel comfortable with each other. That the table leaders will be attentive to the needs of the guests. That they will be able to start and stop talking when needed. That the table will experience comfort, fun, and unity.

Table family names:

As the table families have their first discussion time, pray that they would be able to think clearly and that all distractions would be eliminated. That everyone would participate and feel heard.

The next activity is completing a self-portrait. It is expressed as a symbol, word, picture, song title, etc. and gives an opportunity to express how we feel about ourselves at this very moment. On the next page draw your self-portrait.

[illegible]



Isolation & Rejection

_____ (speaker's name) is currently giving the "Isolation & Rejection" talk. Just as you did for the others, read these as a group and as you read them, pray for the speaker to be clear and guests to be receptive.

Here are the main talking points for the "Isolation & Rejection" talk:

- Any women who has an incarcerated relative/friend, or anyone who has felt rejection, may feel abandoned or rejected by God.
- Having an incarcerated relative/friend may affect our jobs or living conditions. It, along with the rejection that may follow, can also affect our children.
- Rejection causes many, often conflicting, emotions and choices. Sometimes rejection prompts us to reject others, even those who wish to support us.
- In response to messages of rejection we:
 - A. Choose to isolate ourselves from God and others
 - B. Don't trust others for fear of their knowing our 'secret'
 - C. Maintain isolation to minimize the pain
 - D. Build a wall for protection while damaging our self-esteem
- Moving away from isolation is a process. One may need to:
 - A. Identify the source of the pain
 - B. Name "isolation" traps
 - C. Choose to: • Go outside the wall • Not be worn down by negativity • Find support

Answer these questions and share as a group:

Have you ever felt rejection from others? How did it feel?
How did you react?

Have you ever made the choice to isolate yourself from others because of the circumstances of your life?

With whom do you feel comfortable sharing your life? Do you share on a regular basis? If not, why?

Saturday After Evening Team Meeting

Whew! What a day! Spend some time talking about the praises of today. What God things did you see or hear about?

Our dear Father, thank You again for the opportunity to serve You and Your people today through Kairos Outside. We thank You for all You did today in everyone's lives and we pray for those who are still in the process of forgiving and thinking things through. Thank You for the opportunity to show a glimpse of you to the ladies. Please help us rest well tonight. Increase what we need to make it through tomorrow and we will be sure to honor and praise You for all we can do and all You do through us. We love You and thank You. In Your precious name. Amen.

[illegible]

_____ (speaker's name) is currently giving "The Church" talk. Just as you did for the others, read these as a group and as you read them, pray for the speaker to be clear and guests to be receptive.

- Traditionally, some of us have seen the Church only as a governing body or 4 walls and a steeple, but the Good News is that we are the Church. The Church is a living thing with Christ as its head. The Church consists of people of all colors, ages, races and beliefs. The Church is full of many different types of people, of saints and sinners- just as we have both virtues and vices. Some people hide behind their own personal convictions as to what is right, not open to anyone who thinks differently. Others in the Church are stuck at a crossroad in their lives, not able to fully commit themselves one way or another.
- Some of us have had negative experiences with a Church; some of us have been rejected. We must strive to find a Church Community where we can be accepted and loved just as we are. All people need the security of community. It fills basic human needs: to be accepted, to be needed, to be wanted, to be loved, and to be heard.
- God loves us, speaks to us, and comes to us through other people. Isolation prevents others from reaching us. As we learn to find Christ in each other and trust each other, we can experience growth through sharing. The

A large group of people, seen from above, are standing on a white background and forming the outline of a house. The house has a triangular roof and a rectangular base with a central doorway. The people are dressed in various colorful clothing, and their shadows are cast onto the white surface.

- Agape Service,
Thanksgiving Celebration
or Walking in Love**

[illegible]

Forgiveness Service

This time begins the forgiveness service where one of three services will be taking place. Regardless of the service taking place, this is a special time where the team and guests have the opportunity to lay their burdens at the foot of the cross and free themselves through forgiveness.

Take some time to pray for the guests and team. That they would be open to forgiveness and have the strength to begin to let go of previous hurts. In this time, take time to examine your own heart and address unforgiveness in your own life. If it helps, record your thoughts:

What has been your experience of Church in the past?

Have you ever considered that a Church community could be a place of acceptance and love?

Specific prayer requests:

Agape Talk

Now is something very special. The Head Agape is getting up to tell the guests about agape: what it is, where it's come from, and most importantly, who gives the ultimate agape love.

Agape Leader's Comments

Has not this Weekend been wonderful so far? Well, you are not the first ladies to have participated in a weekend like this. In fact, these types of weekends are being held all over the world right now. We have explained to you that Kairos Inside is a program for those on the inside and Kairos Outside is for women who have been impacted by incarceration, but these are only two "brand names" of the many that are happening right now. This type of weekend originated in Spain in the Roman Catholic Church in the 1940s. It was called "Cursillo." As the idea began to grow,



the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches got involved and they began to have Cursillo and Great Banquet Weekends for their church leaders. The Lutherans and Methodists followed by having weekends called "Walk to Emmaus", "Via de Christo," and "Tres Dias." The movements have spread to encompass teenagers with weekends called "Chrysalis,"

Elegant Dinner

You are now preparing for one of the most special parts of the Weekend. It is often thought of as the Kitchen Team's gift to the guests and team. While you might be tired, think about these:



- Some of these women have never been given a rose by a man.
- Many of these women have never been given anything without being asked for something in return.
- Some may still struggle to feel worthy of this gift.
- Some have not been escorted or experienced a 4 star meal atmosphere.
- Many will see you as a direct reflection of Jesus.

What do you want them to see?

[illegible]

One of the things all these weekends have in common is they are powered by prayer. Each weekend is bathed in love and prayer for weeks, and sometimes months ahead of time. This team has been praying for you for many weeks as we prepared to meet you. We may not have known who you were, but God knew and brought you here because of those prayers.

A large, colorful, wavy structure made of many small, interlocking paper rings, resembling a giant paper chain or a complex sculpture. The rings are in various colors including red, yellow, blue, green, and pink, and are arranged in a dense, overlapping pattern that forms a series of undulating waves. The structure is set against a dark background, and the lighting highlights the vibrant colors and the texture of the paper.

These are not the only people who have been praying for you. There are people all over the state of (NAME YOUR STATE) praying for you! They have sent this agape to represent their many hours of praying for you and this Weekend. (Agape Leader holds up some of the most

unique or colorful agape from around the state.) And our state is not the only state that's praying for you!

(Agape Leader reads several pieces of agape, beginning with some from neighboring states and going on to states further and further away until she reads agape from other countries.)



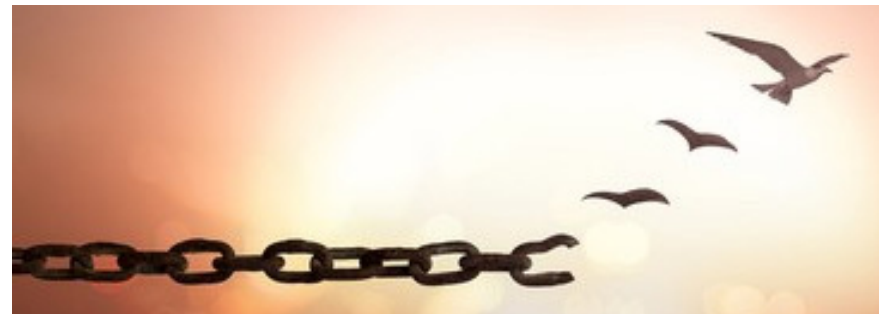
Well, I think you can see that people from all over the world have been lifting us up in prayer this Weekend. I know that some of you have relatives/friends inside who are also praying for you. (Agape Leader reads agape from the various prisons.)

Ever since the first one of you arrived, you have been prayed for around the clock by loving Christians who signed up for a prayer vigil. People are praying for you 24 hours a day, some of them getting up in the middle of the night to spend time in prayer for this Weekend. (Agape Leader holds up Prayer Scroll/Wheel or some other visible sign of around-the-clock prayer.)

But, “agape” means more than praying or writing a letter or coloring a poster. Agape is any prayer or act of love offered to God for the benefit of someone else. It is not necessary, nor is it even important that you know who has performed agape for you. It is only important that you know it was done for you. It can be something simple like making a place mat such as those you have seen at your place at mealtime. It can be something as complex as working with forty or so other people to put on a Weekend for you. It can

takes or how often it has to be repeated. Forgiveness is a choice, a decision, which may have to be made over and over again until the process is complete.

- Perhaps the act of holding on to a rock may make the process of forgiveness very real. Holding on to hate, anger and resentment is like clutching the rock. After a while, your hand hurts and you can't do anything else. Forgiveness is like opening the hand and/or, in the case of us humans, opening the heart. The hurt stops and you are free to do other things.
- Remember that forgiveness is a process that may have to begin anew each day. Forgiveness doesn't normally happen overnight, but the process can bring about great healing and strength for our life.
- God provides more than enough forgiveness for us. How can we do less? In God's love, we are enough, we have enough and we can forgive enough.
- The Spiritual Director will give the instructions regarding the forgiveness lists and an overview of the evening's Forgiveness Service.



Forgiveness of Others

Before the next meditation, the leader opens with this prayer:

Lord, we come to you this afternoon thankful for the opportunity to unburden our anger, frustrations and fears. At times, our life seems so overwhelming and the responsibilities so great. We ask that you help us live with the struggles and the disappointments; we are thankful that you have given us in this time and place to unload our pain. Strengthen our eyes to see, and our will to make the right choices, no matter what our circumstances are. Enable us to know your presence in all things. In your name, we pray. Amen.

_____ (speaker's name) is currently giving the "Forgiveness of Others" meditation. Just as you did for the others, read these as a group and as you read them, pray for the speaker to be clear and guests to be receptive.

Here are the main talking points for the "Forgiveness of Others" meditation:

- "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, if my brother keeps on sinning against me, how many times do I have to forgive him? Seven times?' 'No, not seven times,' answered Jesus, 'but seventy times seven.'" (Matt. 18:21-22). God understands that forgiveness takes a long time. God is with us in our desire to forgive and is with us in the process, no matter how long it

be anything in between: cooking your meals, cleaning the bathrooms, sharing a part of my life's journey with you, etc. You may often hear of the acts of agape as "sacrifices." That is because a sacrifice is any act made holy by offering it to God. It need not be painful. It can be as easy to do as smiling at someone and wishing them a "good day." Agape has no limitations. Some of our food was also given as agape. Some of the boxes of tissues on your tables were given as agape, visible signs of the prayer that was offered on your behalf.

We will post these posters and letters all over the room during the Weekend. Please take some time to read them. Some of the posters were done by children and have wonderful little messages on them just for you! Ladies, you are loved!

During this time, pray that the guests are receptive to receiving the agape. That God will bring them to a deeper understanding of His love and how that effects them.

And that if they don't know Him, that they would be overcome with His love and turn over their lives to Him.

Also pray that those who signed up to pray over the Weekend would be prompted to do so and that God would hear all our prayers!



How does God show you agape love?

Think about your 4th day weekend. What was your favorite agape from that weekend?

What agape can you offer to the guests and team?

Specific prayer requests:

I forgive you for....

I want....

- HINTS:
- You don't have to be aware of love when you start.
 - Don't rationalize or edit feelings--express them.
 - Go through each category and write an equivalent amount in each.
 - Repeat categories if necessary. Keep going until you've gotten to love.

I love when....

Thank you for....

I understand that....

Accepting God's Forgiveness

_____ (speaker's name) is currently giving the "Accepting God's Forgiveness" meditation. Just as you did for the others, read these as a group and as you read them, pray for the speaker to be clear and guests to be receptive.

Here are the main talking points for the "Accepting God's Forgiveness" meditation:

1. "I will forgive their sins and I will no longer remember their wrongs. I, the Lord, have spoken. (Jer. 31:34b)."
2. As we learned in the story of "The Prodigal Daughter," God loves and forgives us at all times--no matter what we do--because that is God's nature. God's forgiveness is ongoing and unconditional; we have only to accept it.
3. It is very difficult to accept God's forgiveness when we are unwilling or unable to forgive others. Sometimes it helps to share this with a friend. When our friend offers us acceptance and forgiveness in God's name, it is easier to accept God's open offer of love and forgiveness. Sometimes we need "God with skin on" to begin the process of accepting the forgiveness given by God.
4. The hardest part of accepting God's forgiveness is remembering it is always there for us and allowing ourselves to believe that God can and will forgive us.

We just need to let God be God. We must continue trusting and believing in God's forgiveness, just as an ocean will always ebb and flow. We can maintain a relationship with God and trust that there is love and forgiveness for us.



This part of the Weekend is a little different in that the meditation goes straight into the next talk.....

I wish....

5. LOVE, FORGIVENESS, UNDERSTANDING & DESIRE

I love you because....



I'm sorry for.... _____



Please forgive me for.... _____

I didn't mean to.... _____

Communication with God

_____ (speaker's name) is currently giving the "Communication with God" talk. Just as you did for the others, read these as a group and as you read them, pray for the speaker to be clear and guests to be receptive.

Here are the main talking points for the "Communication with God" talk:

1. Prayer is talking with God. Grace is the unconditional love by and through which God responds to us. God's grace is always there for us and is unconditional. That is important to us! We do not have to earn God's grace! We must choose to open ourselves to God's response. God can respond to us through study, sharing with others, in books or spoken words, through the actions of others, etc. Sometimes, prayer is just listening and letting God speak to our hearts. Just as we talk to our friends anywhere and at any time, we can talk to God--anywhere, anytime and for any reason.
2. The more we talk with God and get to know the Almighty, the better friends we can be. We can choose to "listen" to God's responses--accept God's grace--just as we choose to make a friend. God wants to be our friend. Just as with our human friends, talking with God is not just reciting a grocery/wish list or talking in stilted or formal language, always reading from a script (prayer book/written prayers). As with any friend, good, two-way communication is essential to maintain the relationship.

3. Jesus is a forever friend, not a fair-weather friend. Jesus stands with us, sometimes carrying us, in every situation; God's loving grace gives us the strength we need. "Nothing is going to happen today that God and I can't handle together."

[illegible]

3. FEAR & INSECURITY

I feel afraid....

I feel afraid that....





Prodigal Daughter

Discussion

At this time, the leader says this:

Life is a process. Most likely, when someone leaves and comes back, even though it might be a wonderful experience and may be easy to welcome them back, there probably are a few unresolved issues. This discussion is important for us to be able to get in touch with our feelings. We may feel we have done a good job hiding our true feelings but it can come out through our actions and interactions with the prodigal child or the good sister. A process takes time to look at and time to share with others who understand your situation.

Take some time as a group to share your thoughts about this question:

Who do you most closely identify with in The Prodigal Daughter story and why?

I feel awful because....

I feel disappointed because....

I want....

I'm tired of....



I want....

2. HURT & SADNESS

I feel hurt because....

Anger

_____ (speaker's name) is currently giving the "Anger" talk. Just as you did for the others, read these as a group and as you read them, pray for the speaker to be clear and guests to be receptive.

Here are the main talking points for the "Anger" talk:

1. God is with us even when we are angry. God understands even when we are angry with God.
2. Traditionally, some women have received messages that feeling angry is wrong, but anger is a genuine emotion, a natural response when someone or something unexpected hurts us, which is beyond our control. What we feel is "what we feel". A feeling is neither right nor wrong, neither good nor bad. Often, feelings of anger are accompanied by and/or mixed in with feelings of guilt ("What did I do to cause this?") and betrayal ("How could he/she do this to me?").
3. Many of the support people for the incarcerated feel anger at different times, yet have no way or place to express it. When this happens, the anger becomes directed inward, which is self-destructive (depression), or outward, which is destructive to others (aggression). If we bury our anger, the situation has the ability to hurt or influence us for a long time, until we deal with it.
4. We have the right to feel, to be angry--even Jesus got angry (John 2:13-16). Our choice is how to channel that anger. Once we accept the fact that we feel anger and touch it, we can deal with it in a constructive way and

move forward. In dealing with our anger, the feelings of guilt and/or betrayal will also be resolved.

5. It is difficult to begin the process of forgiveness. Once we have dealt with our anger we can forgive those toward whom the anger was directed, whether it is others, or ourselves, or both.

Following the Anger talk, there is time given to write and Anger to Love letter following the below format. Spend about 5-10 minutes writing your anger to love letter. Then partner with someone and read your letter to them and let them read their letter to you. If you'd rather stay in one group, that is an option as well.

THE ANGER/LOVE LETTER

To write an ANGER/LOVE letter, begin by expressing your anger, resentment and blame; then allow yourself to move through the other levels until you get down to the LOVE.

Each ANGER/LOVE letter has five parts. The following lead phrases may help you if you get stuck in one level and need to move into the next:

1. ANGER & BLAME

I don't like it when.... _____

I resent.... _____

I hate it when.... _____

I'm fed up with.... _____
