



Update on Kairos During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Evelyn Lemly, CEO)



Hello Kairos family,

It is an interesting time in our world with this COVID-19 virus and pandemic. Sometimes we don't know what to believe in the news, but I do know we can believe and trust our Lord to provide and know He is in control. We pray for the Kairos family daily. If you have specific prayer needs please go to [MyKairos.org](https://www.MyKairos.org) on the home page and share those requests. It is our honor to pray and lift up praises and prayer to our Lord. We also post the prayer list of those allowed to be public, so help us pray for one another. Also remember we are praying daily at 8 am, noon, and 8 pm for Kairos, our graduates, the prisons and youth facilities, our volunteers, our nation and the world, and all those on the front lines from those stocking shelves to doctors and all serving to enable us and protect us daily. We are ensuring we are focused on our Lord daily and trust Him to do as He promises in His Word to heal our land.

“if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

While we certainly are concerned for those who are sick and have lost loved ones, for those on furlough or without jobs, and many more, if we look we will see some good things occurring too. We hear of families learning to be together, sharing meals, praying together or parents playing sports, biking, or spending time with their children. We hear of people learning to be content with their situations and to find the good and blessings in their lives. People are saving money by not eating out as often, eating healthier, and as a family. People are finding out what's really important to them. Many are learning the importance of human touch and missing hugs. And we are hopefully spending more time with our Lord in prayer and in His Word, coming closer to Him. Isn't it amazing what we are hearing about the environment clearing up and smog and pollution reducing? It seems God is healing our land and His people in ways we never imagined and he is using this situation for good as he promised in Romans 8:28 *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*

The Program Coordinators (Craig, Gina, and Kevin) and myself have been busy working through potential scenarios for each program that may occur as we hopefully lift the suspension over the next months. While we don't know the timing, we know there are teams that had completed their team formation meetings to those who were halfway done, there will be team complications that need to be worked out, and Weekend Leader or leadership track items to address. We are trying to get ahead of these and will be providing the State Chairs with detailed responses that we hope covers the majority of the situations. The other issues we can then address on an as-needed basis.

We also want to remind you of the importance of Continuing Ministry to Kairos, and how vital it is to the graduates. It becomes more evident when we cannot be present in times such as this. This situation shows us the importance of us teaching the guidance of Prayer & Share (formal and informal) to the Kairos Inside graduates and having an Inside Council operating, for the mentoring of Kairos Torch to take place so the youth can live it out each day, and for Kairos Outside to have Share, Witness, Accountability, and Prayer (S.W.A.P.) groups for the graduates. Now is the time we see the value and we can make the changes for the future to ensure we are doing Continuing Ministry well. See below for more on each program.

The Importance of Continuing Ministry (from the Program Coordinators)

We are one ministry with three programs. Each program within Kairos has the same common structure of Weekends + Continuing Ministry. So often we love spending time on the Weekend prep and conducting the Weekends, but we don't take the same care with training the graduates/guests to keep it going and to keep growing, which our Continuing Ministry focuses on. During times like these when we cannot be in the correctional facilities or with the graduates/guests of any of the programs, we should gain a better understanding of why Continuing Ministry is so vital to Kairos and to the graduates/guests. Continuing Ministry contains the elements of Kairos that truly focuses on the graduates/guests and their walk with Jesus and how they live daily.

Kairos Inside:

It will be fascinating when both Kairos and the prisons allow us back inside to hold Kairos functions. It will be obvious very quickly if you have trained the Kairos Inside graduates to pray for each other, share their burdens with each other, and to continue building and strengthening their inside community. If you ask them questions about how Kairos Inside worked during the pandemic and actually listen carefully, you will be able to tell if the community is acting in a healthy manner and maybe even thriving, or you will be able to tell that something was wrong and you can then spend some time to train them how to be healthy without volunteers being there.

We ask that you keep an open mind and see what you can find out for ways to better conduct Prayer & Share in the future. We hope you are pleasantly surprised with the results, but if things didn't go well in the absence of Kairos volunteers, make a plan of how to train the Kairos Inside Community to be more dependent upon each other and go back to the roots of the Instructional Reunion – how to do Prayer and Share. Perhaps you should talk and teach them how to do a more informal Prayer and Share - where they do it in the dorm, at recreation, in line for lunch or wherever. That would be an awesome gift you could give them!

Kairos Torch:

Just this week a Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Juvenile Justice forwarded an email from a youth correctional administrator expressing the dynamic work that Kairos Torch Volunteers do in the Continuing Ministry of mentoring. The youth was being transferred to another facility before release yet the administrator asked for the mentoring to continue and the mentor to have contact until the youth's full release from their custody. In this administrator's own words he said: "We have seen great improvement with (youth's name) and would love to continue to watch this youth grow." This administrator has learned what we have known for some time about Continuing Ministry with the youth long after the Weekend - It changes hearts! While we can't be mentoring today, we can be preparing so we are doing it even better in the future.

Kairos Outside:

The purpose of Kairos Outside is to demonstrate God's grace and love by supporting women impacted by incarceration. This demonstration of Christian love and support begins on the Weekend but continues as our Guests and volunteers remain connected while participating in the Continuing Ministry of Kairos Outside. Through attendance at S.W.A.P. (Share, Witness, Accountability and Prayer) Groups and Reunions, the ladies learn to love and trust each other while developing bonds that help them navigate their life's journey and grow in their relationship with Christ.

Now more than ever it is clear everyone needs to have some type of Christian support in their life. The Continuing Ministry of Kairos Outside provides that support. Through attendance at S.W.A.P. (Share, Witness, Accountability and Prayer) Groups and Reunions, you can learn to love and trust other women who can successfully help you navigate your life's journey. S.W.A.P. groups can be held virtually or via phone. If you are not in a group, but want to be, reach out to your Kairos Outside sisters and ask about groups that are already meeting. Or pick up your phone and start a new group – it's that easy. The Advisory Councils should be reaching out to the past guests, touching base, praying with them and inviting them to a S.W.A.P group. All you need to do is get together with a few Kairos friends on a regular basis so you can share your lives, your love, your prayers, and your walk with and growth in Christ.

Kairos it's time to PRAY! We need to be in prayer, communicating what is taking place so we are prepared for restarting, and preparing for the future. It's a great opportunity to get things set up well and ready to go. It's a great time to review our Excellence Initiative and Weekend Leader reports (found in KairosMessenger) to find those areas of improvement and work with excellence in all we do for our Lord.

Stay safe and be in prayer daily,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Evelyn".

Evelyn Lemly

CEO

Kairos Prison Ministry International, Inc.