



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



Greeting Kairos family,

Daily we pray that everyone is safe and healthy. It is always an honor to pray for one another and cover those prayers our volunteers are sharing on [MyKairos.org](https://www.mykairos.org). Join us daily in prayer at 8:00 am, noon, and 8:00 pm.

We are especially praying as states start to reopen activity and we anticipate the days when Kairos can safely reopen. We know much time is being spent with Kairos catching up on things remotely, Advisory Councils and States holding virtual meetings, teams communicating to stay in touch and socializing with one another from afar. After all we want to be social but not physically together. Thanks for keeping things going.

We prayerfully cancelled the Annual Conference in July to meet together. However, it also gives us an opportunity to hold a virtual mini Annual Conference together in July for an evening General Session on Friday the 24th and workshops on Saturday the 25th. The information is on [MyKairos.org](https://www.mykairos.org) and more details will be posted soon. All are welcome. Save the date!

Kairos also joined with the 4th Purpose Foundation to promote Christian encouragement and hope into the correctional facilities. You can share your message to be used by them to those inside. You can also share this with the chaplains so they know digital episodes of messages are available free for them to use inside the facilities. In fact episode 1 is available now at www.4thpurpose.org/visitation2/series/episode-1. All information on how to submit messages and to share these episodes is available on the 4th Purpose Foundation's website, www.4thpurpose.org/visitation2/share-your-message.

The Kairos Family extends into the male, female, and youth correctional facilities along with their families. While we have a small taste of staying put, we have no idea what it's like to be in isolation and incarcerated, or to not be able to see our loved ones that are incarcerated. Our hearts and prayers go out to all impacted. We also lift up those workers in the correctional facilities – the leaders, Chaplains, Correctional Officers, and all the rest. However, we have all learned from this experience and time to

stay at home. I asked a former inmate and a retired Chaplain to share their observations of what happens in a prison when the prison activity stops. Their thoughts follow...

Be blessed, in prayer, and stay safe. We look forward to when Kairos family can return to work doing the programs we love and seeing God at work. I am confident God has continued to work in the inmates lives during this time just as He has in our lives.

Chaplain's Perspective

My observations as a retired Chaplain and current Kairos Volunteer: After observing and being a part of God's miracles in a Kairos Weekend, I was convinced that He, of course, is not limited to Kairos. He can do miracles in prison with or without Kairos and with or without me. The choice was mine, and so, I began to volunteer more and more in chapel services and programs at the prison.

Prison being what it is, there were times when the prison was locked down, whether for a missing spoon from the kitchen, contraband found in inmate cells, or in response to violent incidences. Although inconvenient and disruptive to regular services and programs, I began to observe that although I was not there, the Holy Spirit of the Living God was there and He is always active, taking care of His business. Regularly I would hear reports/testimonies from the brothers of what God had done in their lives during a lockdown. God would use them in someone else's life (a cellie, a friend, an enemy or a new guy), or God would use someone else in their lives. Finally, I began to expect to hear such stories, and when the institution was locked down, I would pray for God to "get-er-done" by performing miracles of growth and radical transformation. Charlie's story is representative of what God did and still does in the lives of our beloved brothers in prison.

Inmate's Perspective

My friend, Bill, a fellow Kairos Volunteer, asked me to share what its like to be "locked down" in prison. What do we do with our time, and is God locked out? I did 5 years at Donovan State Prison in San Diego County. Other prisons may differ a bit, but this is how it was for this follower of Jesus, to use the time given for His Glory, and my good!

Needless to say, God is definitely not locked out! Not at any time! Ever! Even at this time, when everything is locked down on the outside, The Holy Spirit of God walks the tier and visits the cells of every man that simply calls out the Name of Jesus. As I understand it, at Donovan the men are not "locked down." They are allowed movement, and can congregate using social distancing rules as we have. So worship, and bible study, and even inmate led church services are happening in the midst of this. I know that they are praying for us, those that come in and share our love of Jesus and of them, in a profound way. It may sound funny, but they may have more freedom of movement than we do, at this moment in time!! Go figure!

When a true lockdown occurs, it is a total loss of movement, stuck in your cell, only being allowed to go to the chow hall, and right back in the cell, or maybe a 2 minute shower, and they mean 2 minutes! The water doesn't even get warm in 2 minutes!! That's when things start to change. For the true follower of Jesus, being locked down, does not become a time of punishment, at least not for me and a few others I knew. It became a time of intense study, reading the Word of God, with a scalpel, dissecting each word, and getting the meanings of those words in the original language. Finding it used in other passages, and finding out what it was meant to say to those people of the time, as well as what it says to us today. But we have all day with nothing to distract our thoughts or get in the way of losing interest. Having a "cellie" who was also a believer, made it even better. For when you stopped reading, you simply told your cellie, that it was time to pray. Pray for what God revealed to you that day, pray for what He was going to reveal to the two of you as you shared what was read. You have a built in study partner, prayer partner, and "Paul/Timothy" situation going on, 24/7 or forever how long the lock down lasts.

I was blessed with many good cellies, over the years. Soon after I landed on Yard 1, I managed to get moved into a cell with a guy named John. I knew of him from the chapel, but had no idea of the warrior of scripture and doctrine that he was. He was taking college classes by mail, and that move proved to be one of many blessings that I would receive during my early learning years of walking with Jesus. It wasn't a lot different between being locked down, or him coming back from his job, that he would start asking me a question, usually a doctrinal one, and then disappearing into his Bible, or a quick shower, only to ask me within an hour if I had the answer. We studied together always, he was able to ask the right questions that got me to see a little further into the light. He played the guitar and led the worship service in the chapel, so when we got locked down we would sing and praise God for a couple hours at a time. He was very good on the guitar and it made those times even more special. He was my cellie for about 2 years. When the time came for him to be transferred God brought me another Christian cellie, but one that was just a babe, and from all that John had taught me I became the teacher. Lock downs became Sunday school or prayer time, but at least in my cell they were rarely boring or mundane.

I was into books a lot, and when I got some money I would order different books. I got to buy "Chafer's systematic theology" all 8 volumes and I read them all the time. I learned that being able to defend the faith was so important, and that knowing the theology behind the belief was almost as important as the discipline itself. And I became hooked on being able to defend the faith. That travels back to John most likely. He seemed to have answers for those "frequently asked" questions that were stumbling blocks for men looking to find answers when most didn't have them. Or they were found in the other books I read about Christianity. Cell time was for me a blessing and it gave me the alone time with God, or with my mentor, or student, that you don't get when everything is running "normal" if there is such a condition in prison!! It was there in prison that I learned that peace is not a lack of stress in your life, peace is the presence of the Savior. Many men there are real warriors, true followers of Jesus, and they will find a way, to worship, either alone, locked in their cell, or as a group, whether or not the chapel is open. The worship time for an inmate is all condensed down and fortified into segments of time that cannot be wasted, but must get shared as each moment allows. You may not see your "brother" for a

long while, and the desire to share what God has shared with you becomes a moment that may take a long time, you simply cannot take that chance to let it slip away.

It is hard to be a Christian in prison, and to have a brother in Christ that is on the same level of spiritual maturity is hard to find, even harder to find one that is that one step above, and has the ability to disciple. But when those things become available, its actually better inside than on this side of the wall. Very little distracts. Family, circumstances, world news, none of that seems to be as important as we "free" people seem to make it. We're all locked down, everybody has cabin fever, climbing the walls. Very few are able to see the opportunity that we, as followers of Jesus have been given, because freedom is not about movement its about the chains of bondage being broken, the joy of actually doing what God asks of us, "love our brother." Real worship that seems to have nothing to do with needing anything, but that look "from the Saviors" eyes, that comes to the minds eye.

I have been out since July of 1997, and while I am completely joyous about that I miss a lot of what was there in prison. Focus, contentment, and a closeness to Christ, as He roamed the tier in times of being locked down.... or not. There's a lot we could learn from our fellow Christian brothers in prison. I thank and Praise God for the time I spent in prison. Paul had his time in the wilderness, being taught by Jesus, I had my time in Donovan State Prison, being taught by anybody I could find to teach me more about my risen Savior. Bill Brown was one of those people, a very special one, to be sure, and I still am learning from him, to this very day.