



“...I was in prison and you visited me.” Matt. 25:36

Kairos Prison Ministry in Virginia

, 2013 Newsletter

Why Prison Ministry?

In Matthew 25:36 Jesus says, “...I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

Why Do I Love Prison Ministry?

This writer was participating in his first prison ministry weekend. On Saturday night, while the inmates were locked in their cells, our team was privileged to walk through the cell blocks (called pods), handing little bags of blank greeting cards through slots in the cell doors to the inmates. The inmates send the cards to family members, and it’s a blessing to them in that they usually have no money to buy such things. As we were walking through the pods, moving with some haste, we handed in a bag of cards and said, “Cards from Kairos, God bless you.” Most of the inmates said, “Thank you” or “God bless you” in response. After I handed a packet to one inmate, a Hispanic fellow, and he said “God bless you!” I remembered Jesus’ words, “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.” In that man’s face, I could see the face of Jesus, looking *out* of that cell at me, blessing *me*! I lost my breath and delivered the rest of the cards through tears. I encountered Jesus in a very real way in prison that night.

One of our team members, when asked why he started ministering in the prison, commented, “I asked myself where I might find Jesus, and I concluded he would be in the prison.” He was right! I love prison ministry because I meet Jesus, and a whole bunch of guys He loves and died for.

What is Kairos Prison Ministry?

Kairos Prison Ministry International, Inc. is an organization that ministers to the incarcerated, men and women, and family members impacted by incarceration.

Kairos operates in 350 prisons in 31 U.S. states, and in eight other countries. The number of volunteers exceeds 20,000 per year, and over 170,000 incarcerated men and women have been introduced to Kairos. For a statement of faith, and other organizational information, please visit the Kairos web site at www.KairosPrisonMinistry.org.

How Does The Ministry Work?

We have a team of about 40 men (per prison) from all walks of life, with ages ranging from their 20s to 80s. They come from various denominations, but all love Jesus and want to share their love. We prepare to go into the prison for four-day weekends in the Spring and Fall. Our preparations are called *teamings*, and they consist of practical training regarding prison regulations and practices, how to interact with the inmates, extensive prayer, getting to know all team members, becoming one in the Spirit, and worshipping and singing together. When we open the prison doors, we are a close-knit group of brothers with one purpose: To love the inmates with the love, grace, and mercy God has given us. New team members are shepherded and guided by more experienced team members. Though new team members are usually nervous, that disappears after the first few hours of getting to know our new inmate friends.

What is the Prison Environment Like?

The prison environment is understandably dark, but there are many Christians behind bars, too. Those guys flourish during the Kairos weekend, where they receive love and fellowship that they



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may have never received in their lives. The non-Christians (even some Muslims and atheists) watch carefully what’s happening, and even the ones who don’t receive Christ as their Savior acknowledge the love they are shown. When Kairos is in the prison, the gym where we meet is holy ground, and the Holy Spirit’s presence is thick. Lives change. We are the light driving back the darkness, and the inmates see the change.

We spend our days with the inmates in the prison gym, sharing meals and fellowshiping, and following the Kairos program. We stay in a local hotel at night.

How Do The Inmates Behave?

Team members have joked that the inmates are better behaved than any group of middle school students! And that is true. The inmates are courteous, polite, easy to talk to, usually open to sharing, and responsive to God’s love. They like Kairos because it breaks the monotony of prison life, and is a positive experience. (And we take about 1,200 dozen homemade cookies with us!) Some are more open than others, and some of them come from difficult and tragic backgrounds, and thus take time to soften up. But none of them has any defense against the love of Jesus, and the effects are dramatic in some. It’s like pouring water on the desert in the Spring – they burst into life! I have found many friends on the inside, many who will never see the streets. I have many Brothers in Christ behind bars now. (There’s only one way you can meet them – go inside with us!)

How To Get Involved?

Kairos has need for more volunteers due to more prisons opening to us throughout Virginia, as well as new re-entry and mentoring programs for soon-to-be-released inmates. Kairos also takes several clergy into the prison for each weekend, twice a

year. We always have a need for ordained clergy, and there is a special place in our program for them to serve.

To hear more about Kairos, for yourself personally, or to arrange a presentation for your men’s or women’s groups, Sunday School class, or entire church, call _____ (name) _____ at (phone) _____. You are welcome to come to our teaming meetings to meet Kairos volunteers, hear their testimonies, and see what it’s all about. Just call!

Some Inmate Testimonies

“All my life I was told I was doing something good when I did something evil. This weekend is the first time in my life when I’ve felt good about doing something good.”

“I’m leaving with a sense of humility and humanity.”

“He done did it all. All you got to do is believe.”

“This is a great memory. I received love and know that somebody cares.”

“We ain’t livin’ in the dark no more.”

“I’m leaving with a full heart.”

I received Jesus as my Savior this weekend!”

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