



Welcome to the Team Devotional Guide!

As we walk together on this journey of faith, obedience, and self sacrifice, we strive to stay connected in the Spirit. The busy-ness and distractions of life tend to consume our attention, and we end up being focused on the work the Lord has put on our hearts only when we can fit Him into our schedule.

This Team Devotional Guide is a tool we will use on the Kairos experience to help us stay focused on the work of the Lord as we go through each day.

You'll find this Devotional Guide not only helps us to focus on the spiritual context of our joint work, but it also helps with our understanding of the foundations of this experience that we call "Kairos."

I pray that we find the time to allow the Spirit of God to speak to our hearts as we spend time each day being focused on His purposes during our time of preparation.

You are on a Great Journey!

It's a dark and stormy night. The wind is really howling – there's a lot of lightening. The rain is pouring down. Aren't you glad that you're cuddled up in your easy chair with a cup of hot tea there in your cozy family room?

Outside, on the "other side of town," the scene is quite different. There's a group of down and out folks. They're huddled under an overpass for shelter. Trying to start a fire from some trash, but it's too wet. It's really dark and cold out here.

Look at them. Lost. How'd they get this way? What happened in their life that painted them into this picture? Made some bad decisions. Some really bad decisions. Didn't have a family life to speak of. Nobody cared. Maybe found acceptance with the wrong people. Now, just look at them – out here in the dark, stormy night.

And then, something you can't imagine happens! You get up out of that cozy chair and go out into that stormy night with them! A couple of friends get in the car with you along the way, and you go out to that overpass where they are huddled together.

They are suspicious of you as you approach. You stand there with them in the dark. It's cold. You offer friendship. They respond. Laughter starts. One of your friends in the car brings over something warm to eat. Bet they haven't had a good, warm meal in a long time. Stories get told. Then, they want to know – "Why?" Why are you here? Why did you come from the comfort of your home to this dark overpass? Why?

With a lump in your throat, all you can do is to whisper one word. The reason you came, all rolled up into one word. Jesus. "I came because of Jesus, and He'll light up the darkness for you, too."

Oh, what a journey, when you travel with Jesus. No telling where He may ask you to go, but one thing is for sure – He'll light up the darkness through you!

God bless you as you travel out to where it's dark and stormy. People need you to show them His light.



Vulnerability-1

And now I give you a new commandment: Love one another. As I loved you, so you must love one another.

John 13:34-35

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

How are love and vulnerability connected?

Prayer Focus: Christians persecuted in weakness

My prayers go out for...

Vulnerability-1

Being Strong in Our Weakness!

I don't know about you, but I grew up being taught to be strong. Never show your weaknesses. Hide your faults. Emphasize your strong points. Nowhere is the need to "be strong" more noticeable, and more important, than in prison. A weakness makes you vulnerable – to being hurt or taken advantage of. In the free world, being vulnerable opens the door to being hurt, too. We don't want to be taken advantage of, so we keep our "be strong" face on.

"Being Strong" is mankind's way, isn't it? I mean, Christ told us that it is in our weakness that we become strong. It is in our becoming vulnerable that the power of the Holy Spirit works. When we take off our "game face," we let down our guard. We lower the wall that protects us. The very wall that shuts out Jesus finally comes down, and Christ's love shines in and new life begins.

Becoming vulnerable is key if the inmates are to come to that point where the love of Christ can penetrate those hardened walls. But, being vulnerable is not a natural thing – it is an uncomfortable thing. So, the team models vulnerability to show that it is OK in the family of faith to let our guard down and let the true person God created shine through.



I had a lot of experience with hate. This was one of the first experiences I ever had with love.

Every speaker talks from a position of being vulnerable. They are modeling for the residents. And, perhaps even more importantly, the rest of the team is modeling how the Christian Community responds to a brother or sister who is vulnerable. We don't poke fun at them, we embrace them. We speak of our appreciation of, and our love for the one who has become vulnerable.

How we respond is critical. We are being watched, and our actions do indeed speak louder than our words. And that's true whether we're in the prison, or at church, or at home, isn't it?



Vulnerability-2

If you love only the people who love you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners love those who love them! And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners do that! No! Love your enemies and do good to them; lend and expect nothing back.

Luke 6:32-33,35

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Who are your enemies?

Prayer Focus: People who shut out Love because they have been hurt

My prayers go out for...

Vulnerability-2

The Problem with Love

As Christians, we know that we are to love one another. But, to love, to truly love, we must become vulnerable to one another. How can we really love someone if we are not willing to let them know who we really are?

It's hard to allow yourself to become vulnerable to one another. Our experiences in life, even in the church, may have taught us to be cautious - to be on guard - to build our own "hedge" of protection around ourselves - to keep others out of our sensitive areas. Even in the loving environment of a Kairos team, we may find it difficult to become vulnerable to one another. It is risky. But, it is no where nearly as risky as it is in the prison environment. And yet, we know that to allow the gift of God's grace to be received, one has to become vulnerable. That's a very hard thing to expect of a prisoner.

During the course of the Kairos weekend, every participant has to be gently led over that "distrust hurdle." In order for them to become a viable member of the sharing Christian Community, they have to take the risk of exposing their lives, their hurts, their disappointments, and their hopes.

As team members, we model the message. We too must be vulnerable, and to show one another that real love springs forth in that vulnerability. One way we risk becoming vulnerable to one another is to share our vulnerable moments with another person.

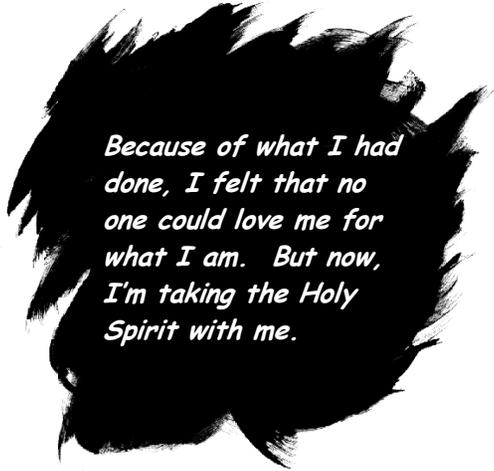
Use the following page to guide your heart to a deeper sense of how much you need Christ and how it is through Him that we can truly become vulnerable to one another.

Vulnerability-2

Where is the ONE place in my life when I truly needed Christ? That one place where I know that I was in so great a need that it was only because God carried me through it that I was able to make it. What was it that created that need? How was it that God stepped in to carry me? Be specific – do not use “cheap grace” and simply say that “I can see now that God was with me,” but be specific – what exactly did God do, and how do YOU know it was God?

Vulnerability-2

God's way is so different than mankind's way. With God, we find strength in our very weakness. It's not our strength, but in realizing our weakness, we find God's strength. It's been there all along, but we miss it because we keep trying to live from our own strength.



Because of what I had done, I felt that no one could love me for what I am. But now, I'm taking the Holy Spirit with me.

When you meet the Kairos participants on Thursday night, don't be surprised to find that they express self-confidence. Don't be surprised to hear that they have close, loving families that write and visit often. Don't be surprised, because they are simply living through the “wall” that they have built to protect themselves. Becoming vulnerable is not part of their mindset.

Don't worry about what they tell you on Thursday night. Just love them. Listen to them, and love them. God will use your loving spirit, born of making yourself vulnerable to them, to break down those barriers that prevent the resident from living joyfully in the Spirit. Don't worry – just listen and love.

What Have You Learned?

Telling my story is risky. My REAL story is risky. Private stuff, you know? If I tell too much, I might get embarrassed, or rejected, or hurt. I'd become vulnerable.

Yes – vulnerable – to each other and to the Holy Spirit. Being vulnerable isn't easy, but it's the way God finds us. That's why it's so important!



Vulnerability-3

We love because God first loved us. If someone says he loves God, but hates his brother, he is a liar. For he cannot love God, whom he has not seen, if he does not love his brother, whom he has seen.

1 John 4:19,20

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Who have you loved that was unlovable?

Prayer Focus: Persons that are hard to love - they need my love more than those who are lovable

My prayers go out for...

Vulnerability-3

Building a New Foundation

When I was in high school, I went to a junk yard and bought a 1946 Chevy panel truck. It was a mess – didn't run, but it looked pretty good. I mean, the body wasn't rusted and dented. I could do something with this! I worked on that old truck for months. Never did get it going. It took a lot more than I had in me to get it fixed.

You see, what I saw in that old junk yard was the body. It looked good! A little sanding and some nice paint, and it would really be something to show off. The problem was, however, that the "guts" of the Chevy were no good. I kept trying to patch them up – you know, new spark plugs when new pistons were needed. New wires when new bearings deep inside were needed. I was working on the surface stuff, and missing the need to start at the beginning. I needed to rebuild that ol' truck from the foundations up.

Have you found your journey of faith to be like my journey with that truck? We focus on superficial things. We work at being "nice" people, we go to church. A new foundation? What's wrong with this one?



A new foundation. Our old foundation was built in a way that we find it so easy to focus on ourselves. We see everything from our perspective. How is this going to affect me? But, a new foundation is needed so we focus on God! No simple tune up – no jazzy paint job will do it. Something serious is needed. Sacrifice. A sacrificial attitude in life. An attitude where I love others, even the unlovable, even above myself. Letting my self focus die out and make room for a new way – a way where I think of myself last. A way where my love is focused on others.

How can I take my focus off of myself as I journey on this Kairos?



Vulnerability-4

You can be sure that who ever gives even a drink of cold water to one of the least of these my followers because he is my follower, will certainly receive a reward.

Matthew 10:42

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Who have I given a drink to in the name of Christ?

Prayer Focus: Those who are spiritually thirsty

My prayers go out for...

Vulnerability-4

Transformations

Something really special happens on a Kairos weekend. There is a transformation that happens. You get a glimpse of it during the Closing ceremony on Sunday afternoon when the participants reflect on the spiritual condition they were in when they arrived, and what they found during the Kairos. They come lost, broken, rejected, angry, faithless. They find unconditional love. Love from Christ, delivered by His children.

You will see this transformation occur. It happens differently for different people. For some, the person you met on Thursday night has been replaced with a new spirit on Friday morning. Others will hear “their” story given by a team member in a Talk, and they will be transformed. Others will find a change through worship experiences or through table discussion. Still others will find transformation in the weekly Prayer and Share fellowship that forms after the Kairos.

*The point is that change takes place – but that change is different for every person. As a team member, it is best to avoid bringing any kind of expectation of this transformation. Just be willing to be a tool of the Holy Spirit. **You** will not transform anything. But through you, the Spirit can work miracles!*

Our role, as team members, is to represent Christ to the residents. Listen, don't talk. Love, don't preach. Sit at the foot of the table, rather than the head of the table. No agenda. No expectation. Just be yourself, loving simply because Christ loved you.

Transformation will occur. And, if you listen and love, you might even realize that you too are being transformed!





So then, my brothers, because of God's great mercy to us, I appeal to you: offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to His service and pleasing to Him.

Romans 12:1

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

How have I been a living sacrifice?

Prayer Focus: Our Clergy Brothers and Sisters

My prayers go out for...

Clergy

Living the Servant Life

Prison is a dark place. The Light has come into the world, but people have loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their works were evil. Prison is not designed to be a fellowship. There are strict rules. We are allowed (permitted) to enter the prison solely because the warden has given his/her permission. We are guests – living under their rules.

Kairos has become one of the most welcome and trusted volunteer groups in the nation in the prisons in which we are ministering. The reason – because we understand that we are guests. Our invitation is conditional. We follow the rules rather than make the rules. One team member choosing to ignore the rules and do their own thing can jeopardize the entire ministry. We take our invitation and our role as guests seriously.

Our clergy brothers and sisters can be a blessing in this area. They come as humble team members. They come as brothers and sisters. They come as examples of the Christian Spirit for both the participants and the lay team members. They come willing to set their “stuff” aside, and demonstrate the sacrificial life of sitting at the foot of the table rather than at the head of the table.

Clergy team members are part of the Table Family. They do not serve as the family leader, but as part of the family. While they may be experts in theology, they don't come as the “Table Answer Man”. But they come as the model of loving humility in servanthood.

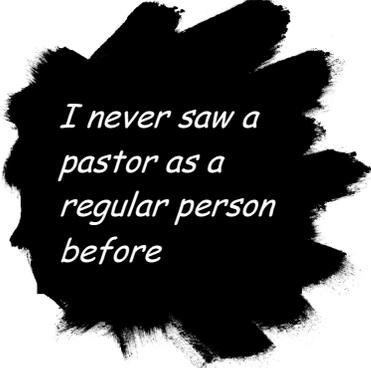
Clergy members may struggle with the fact that Kairos is truly inter-denominational. One of the revelations for the participants is how people from so many different denominations can live and love together. They see us not in our differences, but in our commonness in Jesus Christ.

Vulnerability-5

We stay away from things which highlight denominational differences. We seek to highlight the unity in Christ on a Kairos weekend, and ask all team members to set their denominational loyalty aside and let our loyalty to Christ be our banner.

Communion is one of the Areas that we set aside for the weekend. Because of the denominational barriers that surround communion, Kairos does not conduct communion on the weekend or at team meetings.

During the Kairos weekend, a participant may seek a counseling session. These one-on-one sessions are handled by the clergy. A counseling session must not interfere with the talks. Special sensitivity needs to be given to the reality that a participant may feel the need to confess to previously committed crimes. In most states, this communication is considered "privileged" communication if it occurs between the resident and a clergy person in the environment of counseling and confession. No such "privilege" exists for a lay person.



*I never saw a
pastor as a
regular person
before*

Our clergy team members play such an important role. They help the team see that we can honor the rules we live under and still honor Christ. They help us, by their own acts of servanthood, to understand the nature of the sacrificial life. They help us see how humility is an attractive, inviting lifestyle for the believers. And they offer a special avenue of hope for residents who are hurting.

Pray for our clergy brothers/sisters and watch and learn from them.

Vulnerability-5

Clergy Guidelines

Respond to requests for counseling, remembering that there is no counseling during any talk

Avoid denominationalism

Requests for Baptism are to be referred to the prison chaplain

Participate in the Family, help build Family community

Be a model of Servanthood

Listen with your heart rather than preaching with your lips