

Ohio Policy on Personal Behavior of Kairos Volunteers

Approved by Executive Committee at the request of the Ohio District Committee, June 19, 2002

INTRODUCTION - The Kairos Prison Ministry seeks to promote the establishment and development of a personal relationship to Jesus Christ by the residents that we serve. As a consequence of our own individual service, the personal relationship between Jesus Christ and each volunteer is likely to change and grow as well. In seeking to promote deeper relationships to Jesus Christ, the Kairos Prison Ministry seeks volunteers from a broad range of denominations and theological perspectives, and from a broad range of life experiences, in order to reach the broadest possible range of residents. Kairos Prison Ministry then asks each volunteer to lay aside any issues of theological disagreement, in order to encourage ecumenical fellowship and harmony between residents and volunteers alike, and in order not to create a barrier between a resident and a relationship with Christ.

Individual behavior and personal morality are potentially divisive issues for residents and volunteers. The individual denominations that we come from agree on the need for a high standard of personal morality, but do not necessarily agree on the details of what it means to live a moral life. Our own personal faith history has shaped our own personal morality, and standards for personal behavior. Through sharing during team formation, Kairos Weekends and reunions, we share our faith, our stories, and provide witness to how the Lord is changing us. Through these encounters, our personal morality and that of other volunteers and residents may change. Nevertheless, there will always be differences between the standards for personal behavior between Kairos volunteers.

The 2002 Kairos Organizational Manual does not lay out a specific behavior standard that volunteers must follow, but warns that those who are rebellious, and those that are promiscuous (either heterosexually or homosexually) may pose special dangers to the ongoing ministry of Kairos. This manual also notes that “wounded healers” are necessary components of the ministry, but cautions that if individual volunteers are too wounded by their past failings, or not sufficiently healed, they may be detrimental to the success of the ministry. The Ohio District Committee of Kairos has been informed of difficult situations encountered in some teams as a result of differences in personal morality. After prayerful consideration and discussion, the Ohio District Committee of Kairos has established the following policies on issues of personal morality and personal behavior.

STANDARDS OF PERSONAL BEHAVIOR – The Ohio District Committee of Kairos expects that all volunteers will maintain the high standards of morality and personal behavior characteristic of a mature Christian. The particular details of that morality and behavior may vary slightly depending on the circumstances and people present, but the principles behind our moral choices should be consistent.

1. **Behavior within correctional institutions** - The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction provides a detailed, proscriptive set of rules of behavior for volunteers working in correctional institutions. These rules and regulations are provided to volunteers during team formation. Violations of these rules and regulations may have severe consequences. A correctional institution may ban a volunteer from further service at an institution, and in severe cases, Kairos itself may be banned from that institution. Therefore, the Ohio District Committee of Kairos expects the published rules and regulations, and any verbal orders from correctional officers to be obeyed immediately and without question. In addition, Kairos expects that obedience to written regulations and verbal orders should be done cheerfully, without complaining and without undermining the authority of the correctional officers. If a volunteer has questions concerning the regulations or orders, he or she should obey the order first, then seek additional information about the reasons for the regulation or order from the institutional chaplain at a later date.

All Kairos volunteers who observe a violation of the written rules by another volunteer are asked to discretely inform the offending volunteer of the rules violation. If this fails to resolve the situation, the volunteer who observes the violation should inform the Rector or Retreat Leader of the situation as soon as possible. The Rector or Retreat Leader may then take appropriate disciplinary action, as described in more detail below.

Obedience to the rules of the DRC and of the institution is the minimum standard of behavior for Kairos volunteers. As described below, Kairos expects a higher standard of behavior in all interactions with DRC personnel, residents and other volunteers.

2. **Behavior with residents** – In all interactions with residents, Kairos volunteers are required to maintain the highest possible level of integrity and personal morality, in order to avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Volunteers need to extend agape love and remain nonjudgmental in situations when a resident shares that his or her own behavior, either past or present, is in conflict with the volunteer's standards of behavior.
3. **Behavior with other team members** – Kairos also expects that similar high standards of behavior should be extended to other Kairos volunteers. The behavior of Kairos volunteers towards one another should be that of mature Christians, characterized on the one hand by charity and concern for a brother or sister who is perceived to have fallen, and by discretion, tolerance and mutual support for all of our brothers and sisters.

A Biblical basis for behavior of one volunteer towards one another can be found in Paul's 1st Letter to the Corinthians. In several chapters, Paul lays down strict standards for behavior by members of the community in cases where there was universal or near-universal agreement concerning standards of personal morality. This standard includes prayer for a brother or sister who has fallen, loving attempts to correct the behavior of that fallen brother, and expulsion of the fallen brother or sister only when all efforts to reconcile that brother or sister to the community have failed, and when continued association with that fallen brother or sister would damage the Christian community.

In other chapters (1 Cor 7, 8) in which Paul describes situations where there is disagreement within the community about standards of personal behavior, Paul states his own opinion, and advocates discretion and tolerance for each other. When there was a disagreement about whether an activity or action was permissible or not, Paul suggested that those who believe it is permissible should be considerate of the sensibilities of their brothers and sisters, and either refrain from that activity or action, or show discretion. Those that did not believe that an activity or action was permissible for him or her were to be tolerant of their brothers and sisters for whom the activity was allowed, and were not seek to change the behavior of their brothers and sisters. All of those that disagreed with each other about the morality or propriety of any action should support each other as Christian brothers or sisters, agree to disagree about the actions involved, and affirm that their beliefs and standards may change and grow with time.

Violations of these behavior standards towards other volunteers may include indulging in behaviors which are patently offensive to the common morality, and public display of behavior which may be acceptable to some volunteers, but which causes significant discomfort to other volunteers. Violations of these behavior standards may also include the imposition of a volunteer's morality on another volunteer when that moral choice is not universally recognized, as well as any ridicule or disparagement of another volunteer's behavior, morality or that of different denominations represented within the Kairos volunteer community.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES – When issues of perceived violations of personal behavior standards arise, the policies laid out in the 2002 Kairos Organizational Manual, pages 52 to 54 shall apply and shall be followed. These procedures are summarized below. The extent to which the disciplinary actions specified in this section depends on the severity of the alleged violation, and the difficulty involved in correcting the situation.

1. In cases of perceived minor violations of personal behavior standards or of published ODRC rules, Kairos volunteers are asked to correct each other as quietly and as discretely as possible. Any correction needed should be done privately, quietly, lovingly and with as little attention called to the issue as possible. If this informal correction resolves the issue, no formal actions need to be taken.
2. Formal disciplinary action will only be taken if informal correction is ineffective, in cases where personal behavior threatens the success or future of the Kairos ministry, or when it threatens the peace and unity of a Kairos team. The team rector or the retreat leader has the primary responsibility for any formal discipline necessary during team formation, the Kairos Weekend itself, or a Two-Day Resident's Retreat. At other times (Monthly Reunions, Prayer-And-Share groups) the Local Advisory Board has the primary responsibility for discipline.
3. If formal disciplinary action is thought to be necessary, a complaint against an individual team member should be lodged with the Rector, Retreat Leader or head of the Local Advisory Board as

appropriate. The leader will then attempt to resolve the situation by counseling. If the situation cannot be remedied, the leader has the authority to remove a person from the team.

4. In all situations where a leader removes a member of the team for disciplinary reasons, or determines that additional counseling is needed, the situation must be documented in writing and forwarded to the Local Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will then attempt to resolve the problem. If no resolution is possible, the situation will be referred to the chairman of the Ohio District Committee of Kairos, for formal disciplinary action.
5. In all formal disciplinary actions, all correspondence describing the alleged violation and all efforts to resolve the situation will be provided to the Ohio District Committee of Kairos in writing. The chairman will invite a written response from the alleged offender. After prayerful consideration, the committee will make a decision, which will be communicated to the volunteer and to the Local Advisory Board. The maximum sanction that can be imposed is permanent suspension of the volunteer from Kairos service.

EXAMPLE – It is not possible to describe a Kairos standard of behavior and all of its applications for every possible morality or behavior situation within this document. However, it may be useful to illustrate the general approach in one case in which Kairos policy and standards have been set - the use or abuse of alcohol.

For some Kairos volunteers, the responsible use of alcohol is permitted by their churches, or by their own personal beliefs. For others, the use of alcohol is discouraged or forbidden by their denomination. For recovering alcoholics, alcohol use is not allowed by their own moral code, based on their personal history. Based on these differing standards, there is a potential for disputes to arise concerning the use of alcohol by volunteers.

1. **Behavior within correctional institutions** – The possession or use of alcohol within correctional institutions is expressly forbidden by ODRC regulations, and no Kairos volunteer should ever violate this regulation. Some verbal orders given by corrections officers to Kairos volunteers may be based on a desire to keep materials that could be used to manufacture alcohol illegally from reaching residents. Long-time Kairos volunteers know that these verbal orders and interpretations may be inconsistent from one weekend to another. Nevertheless, it is Kairos policy that the orders of the corrections officers will be immediately obeyed.
2. **Behavior with residents** – It is Kairos policy to never ask a resident what crimes he or she may have committed, or whether or not they are violating institutional rules. Nevertheless, it has been the experience of many Kairos volunteers that residents may share circumstances surrounding their arrest and incarceration and details of their life within the institution during the course of the weekend. Often, these disclosures include descriptions of their abuse of alcohol and other intoxicants. Kairos volunteers demonstrate their care and concern for the residents by: not encouraging the further use of alcohol, non-judgmental acceptance of the trust that the resident has given in sharing their story with us, and striving to invite the resident to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and letting that relationship, once established, inform the resident concerning his/her alcohol use.
3. **Behavior with other volunteers** - Kairos volunteers generally show the virtues of discretion, tolerance and support concerning alcohol use. As a matter of policy, alcohol use is not allowed at official Kairos functions. In other social settings, those volunteers for whom alcohol use is allowed show discretion by not drinking in the presence of those who do not drink. Those who do not use alcohol show tolerance by accept that their brothers and sisters might use alcohol elsewhere, and do not seek to change their behavior. Finally, all volunteers show support for each other by accepting an affirming each other, and the way that God has dealt and redeemed each other.