



Best Practices in Outreach & Recruiting

By Red Gilbert

The first thing I want to express is that over time, each of us has developed methodologies and perfected ways that work for us. All of what we do won't work for all of us. This best practices paper is some of what I have seen work for others and some of what works for me. These two offers of ways to recruit or outreach can be combined with what each of you already knows works for you. This is by no means the "do all, tell all" of recruiting and outreach.

Let's discuss outreach first. In my mindset you have to go and find people in order to recruit. What has worked for me is I ask our outreach/recruiting UAC member if there are any leads or contacts that we need to develop. If he doesn't have any then the next question has to be *why?* If he does, then follow up. I think some Kairos Units have a tendency to believe that outreach is the responsibility of that one person, the UAC or the next team leader. We all know it's everyone's responsibility to be constantly watching for opportunities to share the Kairos Ministry. So, if your recruiting and outreach person has no leads, then how do you develop some? First, talk to the team while you are on a weekend, at a formation meeting or at a reunion. You never know who has shared Kairos and whom they should share that information with. If the recruiting and outreach member of the UAC is struggling (and we all do) ask if you can help. If you are that person, ask for help. Recruiting and outreach can be daunting even for seasoned folks.

Make a list of where you recruit and the dates. Try and revisit places no more than once a year. Any more often and you are staying in your comfort zone. I define "comfort zone" as anywhere you are comfortable going and require the least amount of effort. Let's face it,

we are all much more comfortable talking to the people we know (our church or churches we have visited and had good results) than we are going to some place new. If you find that to be scary and uncomfortable then what worked for me was to go to a small church the first few times. The group is smaller and more intimate. It makes it easier to make mistakes and catch them. You can catch the mistake, check it and change it. Once you have done this a few times you can move to larger groups and churches. No group is too small to share Kairos with. Recently I was part of a group of 4 of us that shared Kairos at a large church but at a senior's Sunday school class. We were blessed to be able to talk for an hour and we were then asked to stay over and talk longer! I don't believe we got even one volunteer from that outreach but we did get a large financial blessing. Many times, recruiting and outreach can involve more than just finding new team members. It can also help your UAC with financial support and prayer support.

Many times, we find that churches are interested in prison ministry but no one has ever approached them. *Ask!* When you meet someone from another church share Kairos and ask if anyone has ever spoken to their minister or their church about Kairos. Next ask for contact information and then share that information with your recruiting and outreach person. When you are getting this information, you are usually in a one on one conversation and that will be easier than a group. Hopefully then the recruiting and outreach person will follow up with their team and start the ball rolling.

Don't have tunnel vision. Look for all the opportunities, not just the ones for your ministry. When I go and talk about Kairos I always try and take my wife or someone else along to share Kairos Outside and to answer questions. Share all you can whenever you can.

What do I talk about...?

When you are going to present Kairos somewhere (again this is what works for me) start with telling everyone you are not here to ask for money. Many churches have speakers frequently and many are

asking for funding for their ministry. I find if I tell them I don't want any funds they seem to relax and listen more intently. Next, I share my story. Each of us has a story that is unique to us. Most times, wherever I go, they haven't heard it. Share your witness, how you started your walk with Christ and how Kairos is a part of that walk. Share the power that is a weekend, a reunion and the Mountain top experience that the weekend is. Explain that it is a continuing Ministry that goes on for as long as the brother in white is incarcerated. Explain how some people are released and choose to come back to prison and share how Kairos has changed them. When I close, I remind them I am not asking for financial support, I want people, men and women, that might be willing to be part of a team of folks that travel to the unit and work together to share and show the love of Christ. We usually have an area where I tell them to come afterwards and talk to us if they want more information or have any questions. Make sure you get contact information from everyone you speak with. We try and get a name, phone number and an email.

Is talking to a group hard? Yep, the first few times are. You know your witness; you know your Kairos story so there really isn't anything to study. As I said start small and gradually increase the number of people you talk with. Each time you share Kairos and your witness it will get easier.

Recruiting

So now you've spoken to a group or individuals how do you recruit them? It's as easy as two words "follow up"! When you do your outreach have a way to garner the contact information and then follow up. Call, email or whatever way works best for you. If they are interested in being on a team (in any capacity) be sure and let the next team leader have their information and both of you should stay in contact with them. At least a month or more out contact them again about the first team meeting and have the when and where information to review with them. Ask the team leader to contact them personally and share the meeting dates and times. They should also answer any questions and, if possible, see if they can arrange for a mentor before the first meeting. I realize that can be difficult but it is important to

recognize that up until this point you are the only Kairos person the newbie has met. We want him to quickly realize he will be part of a team.

My only other advice is that team leaders should give positions of responsibility to new team members. The more they feel a part of the Kairos experience, the more the weekend will impact them. When they are coming off that Mountain top, they will be recruiting new folks for us.

Finally there are many available tools you can use to assist and enhance your recruiting and outreach efforts, be sure to check out the following websites:

Kairos of Texas

<https://www.kairostexas.org/>

Recruiting & Outreach

<https://www.kairostexas.org/Recruiting-Outreach.html>

KPMI

<http://www.mykairos.org/>

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