

## WHAT KAIROS INTERNATIONAL SAYS ABOUT *CLERGY*

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(With lots of help from former Kairos International Men's Ministry Coordinator, Ken Rocks, and the new Silver Manual)

As we start to plan our fall weekends, team formation is in full stride. Now is the time we get together with old and new Christian brothers and sisters to facilitate the teaming/bonding process. The Weekend Leader is tasked with providing the environment for spiritual formation of the team into one body of Christ, the church. Along the way, the Weekend Leader will be praying and searching for clergy to be part of the team.

While the Kairos ministry is a lay-led ministry, clergy are essential for the success of the Kairos programs. Nevertheless, it is very important to ensure that the ecumenical nature of the Kairos ministry be upheld. This requires that the clergy come from a variety of denominations. While serving as a Kairos volunteer clergy they must refrain from activities that are unique to their particular tradition.

The question of who is clergy and how they qualify is also an important issue. Persons who serve as clergy on Kairos Inside teams frequently come from very different theological backgrounds. Although Kairos is not a church, we also have a special responsibility to the participants and the institutions.

We are always concerned about a resident who chooses to share information with Kairos clergy. While we do not administer liturgical practices from any Christian denomination, we do recognize that residents seeking God's forgiveness may share confidential matters with persons designated by us as clergy. Because of this fact, we must be thoughtful about those persons we designate as clergy.

Clergy are called to listen, listen, love, love, as are all team members. As God's representative and shepherd in the institution, they are called to listen to the flock and their concerns. Only through listening can we get to know and love our participants. Listening with a true servant's heart will be a blessing to the Participant and to the team member. In Kairos, we do not preach to our participants. As clergy, they are expected to follow the talk guidelines as any other team member. When someone follows their own agenda for a talk, then the carefully developed sequence of the talks is disrupted. Each talk is the foundation for the next.

In essence, Kairos has established a three-step analysis to be considered Kairos clergy:

Step 1. Should have received, formal training from their Christian denomination or church authority (by this we usually mean seminary or Bible College), Or should be ordained by their Christian denomination or church authority, or be licensed by their state as clergy, Or should be recognized as clergy in good standing by a Christian religious order (usually refers to a community of priests, nuns, monks), Or should be actively engaged in or retired from ministry by a recognized Christian church authority

Step 2. Should be able to work effectively in an ecumenical or interdenominational setting

Step 3. Must qualify under their state law as being covered by the privileged communication statutes

Make no mistake: It is difficult to find qualified clergy. However, it is unfair to the residents and to the ministry (and, yes, there may be legal ramifications also) to accept someone who claims the “mantle” of clergy without the “trappings” underneath.

We are thankful and blessed to have Clergy who are so dedicated to be a part of the Kairos program. At the same time, it is unfair to the ministry, to the residents, and to God (and may also have legal ramifications) to take “willing bodies,” who do not pass the above tests.