

Dear members of the Grace Fellowship community,

The global outbreak of the Corona Virus (COVID-19) provides an opportunity for us to consider the best ways to love God and our neighbors during these challenging days. Currently we are not cancelling our Sunday worship services. While our response may change as this situation unfolds, here are several suggestions to help us live wisely and well with what we know to be true today:

1. Be Calm

God's Word is filled with soul-satisfying truth to guide us through times like these. For example, **Psalm 91:1-2 (NKJV)**

¹ He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

² I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."

Philippians 4:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Consider using a Bible concordance to locate and study uses of words like "trust," "fear," "worry," and "afraid" in the Word of God. Trials can draw us closer to the Lord if we allow them to.

Spend time praying for our local, state, national, and world-wide health-emergency leaders. These courageous men and women are carrying heavy loads as they labor together to keep us safe.

2. Be Careful

One way we love our neighbors during a medical emergency is being especially vigilant about everyone's health.

- a. Our custodial team at church is adding an extra layer of cleaning to ensure that our facilities are well-prepared each day and especially on Sundays.
- b. If you feel sick, please stay home and listen to the sermon online after it is posted.
- c. If you have visited an area within the last 14 days identified by the CDC as Level 3 Travel Health Notice, please stay home.
- d. If you are elderly, or your immune system is compromised, please feel free to stay home, if that is your preference.
- e. Please refrain from shaking hands or hugging people. We plan to use the "Baptist-shoulder-bump" for the foreseeable future.
- f. Practice common sense health habits like washing your hands frequently, coughing into your sleeve, etc.

3. Be Compassionate

God's Word instructs us to:

Philippians 2:3-5 (NKJV)

³ Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

- a. On social media. Stressful situations sometimes result in harsh words on-line. Please be sure that your interactions are characterized by Christ-like love.

- b. Regarding the needs of others. It is highly likely that your friends, co-workers, and neighbors will have special needs during this time. As Paul explained to Titus,

Titus 3:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

- c. Let's be sure to check on one-another during this time and be especially vigilant about serving our friends and neighbors well.
- d. Towards our leaders. Some of the challenges our nation is currently experiencing is because people ignored the advice or warnings of those in charge of managing this crisis. Faith intends to stay in close contact with our local, state, and national leaders and follow the directions we are given. As Paul said earlier in the book of Titus:

Titus 3:1 (NKJV)

¹ Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,

- e. For the most up-to-date information from our government leaders, visit the CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov> and <https://odh.ohio.gov> the Ohio State Health Department website.

We will continue to communicate in a timely fashion as more details about this emergency unfold. We want to be sure that all our member's feel connected, loved, and well-cared for during this time.

In Christ,
Pastor Korney Petrenko