



Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update - 18th March 2020

Church Family

We would like to suggest to you that we undertake a change of direction for our **Sunday services and all ministry groups**. We believe it is important that we do all we can to provide an environment that supports physical distancing.

Although some may feel this is too early a move or it is unnecessary, it is far better than a late response. One infection expert said when you wait to know that it is the right thing to do, it's already too late. Countries that are now in serious lockdown had an attitude of let's see what happens. We don't feel comfortable with that. The more contact we have with people the more chance there is for the virus to spread.

We are making the decision to cancel all church meetings from today up to and including Sunday March 29. Life groups are fine but that is a choice for each group to make. (Please continue to check the church website)

This will give us time to reassess and plan. The speed at which the situation is changing means that we will have a much better insight into the direction we should take. It is simply a better safe than sorry philosophy. If we can in some way slow the spread within our church family, this will be a very positive and proactive decision, displaying responsible attitudes.

We will be seeking other creative ways to maintain fellowship that minimise risk and will consider multiple options that fall within government and health advice at that stage. We will in some way make a weekly message and church information available to people via internet or other means.

We hope to be able to bring you a plan of how we might move forward if we cannot resume normal meetings. We could encourage house church groups of 8 – 12 people. This could be built around existing life groups as well as new groups starting up as a result of the need. We could also consider having life group style meetings during the week at the church. Once details of opportunities are offered, we would nominate the meetings we would commit to, enabling us to control numbers. All this of course is dependent on what directions we are given by health authorities.

We need to be creative, creating an environment that satisfies our social and spiritual needs. Again, I want to stress, that this will be very important if the challenges continue over a long period of time.

If this 2 week closure is an overreaction – then that's good - as the overall outcome is better than hoped. We can live with that criticism. However, it is far better than the regret of *if only* we had acted sooner.

Please pass on this information to anyone who may not be contactable via mobile phone or email or those you know who may not yet be on the church database. Please pray for wisdom and insight as we plan. Pray that there would be a turning to God within our country as our nation realises their need for Him. Please understand the importance of meeting together and so committing to some form of gathering as options are offered.

There is no joy in seeing anyone suffer in anyway. However, we can trust that God can bring about a way forward if we seek him earnestly. What we do know is that Our Father is not taken by surprise by what is unfolding in our world right now. We can rest in The truth that He will take this event and turn it around for the advancement of His Kingdom. We need to be careful but without fear. May our faith, hope and trust grow through this challenge.

Please call one of the pastors if you have any insights or questions. Together we can enjoy resting in the faithfulness of God.

God bless
Pastor Paul and Leadership Team VPBC.