Calvary Bible Chapel

Fremont, California

March 12, 2020

Dear Saints,

Many of us have been following the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus (coronavirus) for some weeks as it has spread throughout the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) has now declared that it is a pandemic. Although we believe the risk of infection in our area is currently low we think that it is prudent to be pro-active in caring for the Saints at Calvary Bible Chapel.

Although there is still much to learn about this virus there are some things that have become clearer to the medical experts. Those considered at higher risk include:

* People over 60 years of age. The risk increases significantly thereafter and escalates with age, with persons over age 80 in the highest risk category.
* People, regardless of age, with underlying health conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, or chronic lung diseases like COPD, as well as those with severely weakened immune systems.

Approximately 55% of our fellowship consists of people considered at higher risk. We love all of the saints and want to take appropriate action to care for and protect all of the believers from unnecessary exposure to this contagious disease.

As of this afternoon (March 12, 2020) the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has replaced its earlier guidance with stronger guidance which we include here. Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) is following the guidance by the (CDPH). We are looking to public health officials to provide accurate information that we can follow to provide effective measures to keep our members safe and free from the virus.

“These recommendations have been updated to align with guidance issued by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) on March 12, 2020, and replace our local guidance issued on March 10, 2020. Effective immediately and through the end of March 2020, **In alignment with CDPH guidance, we recommend that:**

1. All non-essential gatherings of more than 250 people should be cancelled or postponed.
2. Smaller gatherings should be cancelled or postponed if held in spaces that do not allow social distancing of six feet per person.
3. Gatherings for people at high risk of complications from COVID-19 should be limited to a maximum of 10 people.
4. A gathering is defined as any event or convening that brings together people in a single room or single space at the same time, such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, large conference room, meeting hall, or any other indoor or outdoor space.
5. This guidance does not apply to activities such as attendance at regular school classes, work, or essential services; nor to essential public transport, airplane travel, or stores and malls.
6. The full CDPH policy can be found [here](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Gathering_Guidance_03.11.20.pdf). “

**Items 2-4 in particular apply to us at Calvary Bible Chapel. Since over 55% of our congregation is at increased risk of severe illness, the elders believe it is prudent to cancel all Sunday services, starting March 15, 2020 and for the duration of the month of March, 2020. This will also mean that the pot-luck meal is cancelled. We will re-evaluate what to do as the situation changes.**

We are not succumbing to fear or to media hype, but believe that out of an abundance of caution and out of an abundance of love we want to protect the saints from unnecessary exposure to this virus and the severe illness that can accompany it. We want you to remain with us for the future so that we can worship the Lord together.

What are some things you can do:

* Pray for those who are sick and that the Lord will draw unsaved people to Himself
* Take the time to listen to some of the sermons you may have missed by visiting the Calvary Bible Chapel website at [www.calvarybiblechapel.org](http://www.calvarybiblechapel.org)
* Meditate on God’s promises and enjoy the comfort of His Word such as we find in Psalm 91, Psalm 17:8, 36:7; 57:1; 61:3; 63:7, and Psalm 121.
* Take time to communicate with each other by phone, email, text or facebook
* Pray that a vaccine will be developed soon and that it will be released as soon as feasibly possible

Here are some practical suggestions to protect against infections:

* Anyone who is sick should not go into public places.
* Those who are at higher risk for serious illness should stay at home
* Public distancing is suggested by avoiding hand shaking and hugs
* Increase physical hygiene, such as:
* Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
* If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used
* Avoid close contact with other people
* Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
* Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue - if available - or into your elbow
* Clean surfaces with standard disinfectant cleaners
* For additional recommendations and resources, please see:
* [CDC's website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html) | [CDPH's website](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/CDPH%20Guidance%20for%20Mass%20Gatherings%20and%20Large%20Community%20Events_ADA%20Compliant.pdf)
* [Alameda County Public Health's Website](http://acphd.org/)

Yours in the Lord’s Care,

The Elders of Calvary Bible Chapel