



INITIAL FIERCE CHURCH RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS

March 13, 2020

**This long note is broken up into two different sections. First there is Five Truths to Guide You. Half-way down is what the plan is with regard to Sundays. Feel free to scroll to the second section first if that's what you're looking for.*

Updates can be found at fierce.church/health.

Dear Fierce Church family and friends,

I hope this note finds you doing well. I am sending to as broad an audience as possible to ensure we're reaching everyone even slightly connected to Fierce Church. You are in my constant thoughts and prayers during this season with the concern of the Coronavirus outbreak.

We are establishing a *Health and Wellness* page on our website to provide details on our response, guidance, and trustworthy sources of information.

This page is where we'll be putting information and FAQs.

We will update this page frequently as more information becomes available, and as the situation changes, but I wanted to write a letter as your pastor to frame this situation with a biblical worldview.

In the wake of the Coronavirus, let's reflect on the following truths:

FIVE TRUTHS TO GUIDE YOU

1. God is sovereign over the world and your life.

Jesus' doesn't want Christians to fear death (Hebrews 2:15).

“Don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell. What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.” (Matthew 10:28–31, NLT)

Job's words are also comforting:

“You have decided the length of our lives. You know how many months we will live, and we are not given a minute longer.” (Job 14:5, NLT)

We should seek to rest and meditate in these comforting realities quietly!

2. It was always true that our lives are brief and uncertain.

The apostle James declares:

“How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it's here a little while, then it's gone.” (James 4:14, NLT)

The psalmists write things like:

““Lord, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered— how fleeting my life is.” (Psalm 39:4, NLT)

“Seventy years are given to us! Some even live to eighty. But even the best years are filled with pain and trouble; soon they disappear, and we fly away.” (Psalm 90:10, NLT)

“So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You [God] a heart of wisdom” (Psalm 90:12).

Even if there is not a cloud in the sky, our lives are here one day and gone the next.

The moment each of us became a Christian, we should have heard the call of heaven to

“Abandon this world in your heart. It is a sinking ship.”

This world is not our home; we are sojourners who are just passing through. In Jesus’ name, may we continually adopt an eternal perspective on the temporal nature of our lives. Let’s live like we’re leaving.

3. People may be significantly more open to Jesus for a little while.

When people think they could possibly die, they may be more responsive to the good news of Jesus.

Some of us remember the curious two weeks of national compassion and receptivity that followed the 9/11 attacks. That moment of spiritual softness seems to vanish quickly, but it was one of the brightest things about those dark days.

Assuming such openness could be possible again, but short-lived, let’s not waste any opportunities.

4. Now is the time for COMPASSION, and NOT the time to cross over on the other side of the road.

“Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.” (Luke 10:31, ESV)

Let’s be the character Jesus applauded in the story of the Good Samaritan.

Not only should we not react in fear like the rest of the world, but we should be very intentionally selfless and others-centric.

In Jeremiah 29:7, the Lord said to His captive people: *“Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.”*

- May we be the first to bring a friend or coworker a meal.
- May we be the first to drive someone to the pharmacy to pick up their prescription.
- May we be the first to share our toilet paper and hand sanitizer :
- May we be the first to listen patiently and graciously, even if people see this situation differently than we do.
- May we be that last to get roped into embarrassing arguments online that do a lot of ‘should-ing’ on people but don’t result in practically helping anyone.

If there is EVER a time for the church to shine, it is now (see Philippians 2:15)

While it is true that WE’VE never been here before, the Church of Jesus Christ HAS been here before throughout the centuries. They acted nobly and ran TOWARD the hurting and the sick. May we do the same.

5. Now is the time for gentle and earnest COMMUNICATION.

Let’s not STOP at being helpful temporally. Let’s do all we can to be helpful eternally. If you a Christian, you have the Cure for Death (Jesus) living within you.

“Everyone who lives in Me and believes in Me will never ever die.” (John 11:26, NLT)

Now would be a shameful time to hoard it.

Do it respectfully, but as you have an opportunity, now is the time to share the reason for the hope you have in Christ. (see 1 Peter 3:15)

Please know that I’m praying for you, along with Fierce Church’s leadership. We deeply care about you.

With love, Mark Carter

WHAT WE'RE DOING

Sundays

- We are taking things week-by-week because (as I'll discuss this weekend), we are stronger when banded together and focused on the Lord Jesus. For this reason, We are having live Sunday Services and will reevaluate each weekend. As long as the threat to the general population of our area is low (i.e., # of cases), we'll continue to meet in person.
- That said, this direction could literally change at any moment. As we've seen in the last few days, it seems as though things can pivot pretty quickly. If we are not meeting, we will communicate that via the website and ALL social media channels.

Kids

- It's never a good idea to bring kids who are sick, and even less so now.
- We will have sanitizer available at every check-in station. Please sanitize your children's hands and your own.
- Check-in Kiosks will be sanitized before each service, and frequently during heavy check-in times.
- All surfaces kids come into contact with will be sanitized before each service.
- Gloves will be worn for anyone handling snacks or changing diapers (nursery only).
- Any child displaying any signs of illness will be returned to their parents.
- Check out these wellness tips for your kids here: <https://is.gd/fDLPEK>

Sunday Etiquette

- At the building, we'll be wiping down all doorknobs/handles, and keeping soap dispensers full.
- For now, let's be respectful of everyone and not assume they want to shake hands or have a Christian side-hug. It's super cool to greet each other with a wave, and salute, or a "Wakanda forever" chest thump (or any you feel is appropriate).
- Smile extra big.

Staying Home?

- Please don't attend if you are sick (or your kids are sick), and while you're sick, stay home for all church functions.
- I don't want you to feel unsafe, so if you are not sick but feel like staying home is the better option, no points lost if you choose to do so. Especially if you're 60 or older or have other health issues (those most at risk), please consider staying home to be an option (and a very wise one for some). You can watch online :)
- For those who DO stay home, I'm asking you to stay engaged with your church. Attend whatever we're doing online. You are part of our community, and we want everyone together, even if only virtually.
- Use Facebook to view the services online (some of our pastors will be online for each service) and join the Fierce Community group for up to date info.
- It's okay to attend small groups or other meetings at your own discretion. Fellowship should actually remain a high priority, but please don't attend if you or your kids are sick.

How You Can Be Helpful Right Now

- Attend: present or present online. We are strongest and have the greatest opportunity for good when we are unified.
- Fellowship is still important. Encourage one another. Call, text, or meet up virtually.
- Christian charity: Don't pressure others to see the Coronavirus the way you see it. There should be great compassion but also great freedom to have a different opinion. The one thing almost no one's is the benefit of hindsight on this, so let's just all speak humbly.
- Be even more intentional about giving. It sounds weird, but now is not the time to act like God's not real, but like He IS. Pray for those far from God to be softened and to seek out the comfort of everlasting life through Jesus Christ. The church is going to need to do more than keep the lights on, so please give not only faithfully but liberally.

Contact help@fierce.church if you're in need of anything but can't get to it (supplies medicine, etc.)