



H I L L S I D E
COMMUNITY CHURCH

March 18, 2020

Greetings Hillside Family,

Wow. If it wasn't for the impact the Corona Virus (COVID-19) is having on people's health and finances, this would be a fascinating time in history. If we can calm our own apprehensions, we see that God is laying at our feet a golden opportunity for ministry and spiritual growth.

Unlike September 11th, 2001 (9/11) that affected mainly the United States, this is a worldwide opportunity for believers to bear the message of Christ to a world who suddenly sees how fragile their lives are. Our job is to figure out how to take it up and be wise at the same time.

With that in mind, the Elders of Hillside Community Church met to consider how we should respond. Currently, Porterville has 1 confirmed case of Corona Virus. That does not take into account how many people were exposed without knowing it. There is a real danger of it being spread further even to those in high risk groups.

We do not want to have to do this. But, we feel compelled, out of care for our community and those in our congregation, to **cancel all ministry events through March 29th**. At this time, canceling events for a period of time is the best way to curb the risk of infecting others.

We have a strong view of the sovereignty of God, but Proverbs 27:12 tells us that, "A prudent man sees evil and hides himself, The naive proceed and pay the penalty." Even people with a high view of God's control over the events of human affairs, need to be wise about dangers.

If this was an issue of believers being persecuted and forbidden to gather, our response would be different. But this is affecting everyone and we are acting out of care for others. And it is only for a period of time.

Again, we are canceling all ministry events and gatherings for the next two weeks, through March 29th. That includes our worship services, Sunday school, ABF's, Children's Church, AWANA, youth group, Young at Heart, women's Bible studies and events, and even our Life Groups.

On Monday, March 30th the Elders will re-evaluate and make a decision on resuming services at Hillside. I know I'm not alone in really hoping we'll be able to meet for Good Friday and Easter. Let's pray.

We may not be able to gather in our sanctuary, but we can still gather, even if from our own home or the home of a friend or neighbor... which is why we intend to live stream our Sunday sermons on Facebook Live, which will be posted on our website, and the audio will be available on our website (**hccporterville.org**) or on Sermon Audio. You can find many **helpful resources on our website** during this time that we're making available, such as:

- Our weekly bulletin.
- For parents with children, we will be posting downloadable lessons and worksheets for your children, along with short videos that go along with the lessons.
- For the youth, our Youth Pastor, Jon Piper will make videos of his lessons available.
- Our Worship Director, Calli Piper is providing links to the worship songs that we had already planned to sing in our services.

Remember, we are still worshippers. We still need to be fed God's Word. Take advantage of these things.

Despite the virus, Hillside still has a mortgage payment on the building, staff salaries, insurance, and utilities to pay for. Especially, during this time, we truly appreciate your financial support. There are a couple of options to continue your giving. A number of people are discovering how easy it is to give online, which you can do on our church website. You can also mail your offering to the church or bring it in during office hours.

If you have any problems or questions about utilizing any of the resources we have listed above, please call the church office or reply to this email and we would be happy to assist you.

For the time being our office will still be open, with ministry staff working, unless directed to do otherwise. During this time, our pastoral staff will still be available to you. As staff and elders, we plan on doing everything we can to up our game and to be in touch with you and make sure the flock is shepherded and needs are cared for. If you have a need, please let us know. Just call or email us. Ministry is going to be different for a time, but it will STILL take place.

Right now, all of us need to make sure we are nurturing our own walks with the Lord. Every day, spend time reading or listening to God's Word so that your soul is nourished with TRUTH. Romans 10:17 says, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." Trusting God is linked to our intake of His Word. Each day seek the Lord in prayer, taking your needs to Him. See this time as an opportunity to grow spiritually. If you have not taken advantage of it yet, this may be the time to begin going through "One to One Discipleship" with someone else. Call and we will set that up.

And at the core, no matter what circumstance we find ourselves in, God has called us to be faithful to bear the message of Jesus, the gospel. Take the message that we are:

[1] Sinners separated from God, who

[2] Need a Savior who can pay for our sin, and that

[3] Savior is Jesus, who died and rose again as proof our sin was paid for, and that God calls us to respond by trusting in Christ and surrendering our lives to Him.

This is an unprecedented time to be able to minister to people who do not know Christ, and to encourage others who do know him. While the world is reacting out of fear, we can have confidence in the certain knowledge that God has our lives in his hands.

Please keep an eye out for updated information as it becomes available on our website, through email, and our Facebook page.

Blessings,
Pastor Ray