

### COVID-19 Response Guiding Principles:

1. The pastor's call to care for and shepherd the flock:

*1 Peter 5:2-3 – shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; <sup>3</sup> not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.*

*Hebrews 13:17 – Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

- Is pastor faithfully caring for the souls of our members through this time?
- Is pastor taking into account what is best for our members spiritual and physical health?

2. The command not to forsake assembling:

*Hebrews 10:24-25 – And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

Neglecting (εγκαταλειπωτες – egkataleipotes) – to forsake; to turn one's back on; abandon; desert.

- Are we forsaking the assembling of ourselves together by not meeting together?
- How is the church being spiritual affected by not meeting together?
- Are we failing to meet together because of fear of illness, a lack of trust, or some other reason?

3. The command not to fear but to hope and trust in God

*Psalm 46:1-3 – God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. <sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, <sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.*

*Philippians 4:6-7 – do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

- Are our decisions being driven by fear of illness and death?
- Are we helping our members to hope and trust in God?



4. Care for the most vulnerable:

*James 2:14-17 – What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup> So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

*1 John 3:11 – For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.*

*Philippians 2:3-4 – Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

*Matthew 25:34-39 – Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? <sup>38</sup> And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ <sup>40</sup> And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’*

- Are we loving our neighbors and one another through our actions?
- Are we looking after our own interests or are we taking into account the most vulnerable among us?

5. The need to take precautions:

*Matthew 22:39 – And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*

*Philippians 2:3-4 – Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

*Luke 14:28 – For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?*

- Are we taking the reasonable precautions necessary to protect one another?
- At what point do the precautions no move from reasonable to unreasonable?

6. The command to submit and honor authority:

*Romans 13:1 – Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.*



*1 Peter 2:13-14 – Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, <sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.*

*Proverbs 21:1 – The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.*

*Daniel 2:21 – He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;*

- What is our state/federal government requiring?
- What is our state/federal government requesting?
- Is the state/federal government singling out churches?
- Is the state/federal government asking us to disobey God? (*Acts 5:29*)

#### 7. Testimony to the lost

*Matthew 5:16 – In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

*2 Corinthians 8:21 – for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man.*

- How will our meeting together impact our testimony in the community?
- Will our meeting together advance or hinder the gospel?

#### 8. The command to ask for wisdom

*James 1:2-6 – Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup> for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup> And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. <sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.*

- Are we seeking God's wisdom or quickly proclaiming our own understanding? (*Prov. 20:6*)

#### 9. The need to lovingly care for those of opposing views

*Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8*

- Are we expressing our views in such a way as to care for those who disagree with us?
- How do we lovingly communicate our decisions to people with diverse opinions as to how we should move forward?

