



# APOLOGIACHURCH

## Official Response to the Coronavirus

Sunday, March 15, 2020

After much prayer, discussion, and consultation, we the Elders of Apologia Church in Mesa, Arizona, felt it necessary to make a public statement on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in which we all live and are attempting to navigate. Throughout Scripture, God has instructed his people to live lives free from fear and to trust wholly in his sovereign decree. Let it be known plain and clear that we are in no way fearful of this virus. God is completely sovereign over these circumstances, and although we lack total control over the spread of Corona, we look to our Sovereign Creator, who is in complete control. He is the One who foresaw this virus before the foundation of the world. God knows who will or will not be infected with Corona, just as he knows the eternal outcome of every one of our souls.

All that to say, while trusting in Almighty God, we also desire to be wise and cautious as we take seriously the ramifications of an outbreak of such a virus. While trusting God, we also desire to love our neighbors. There have been many lengthy, thought-out discussions as to how we can exhibit love for neighbor while also honoring God. As Elders, we have been given a great honor and significant duty to shepherd the flock God has provided us. We recognize that shepherds have the responsibility of caring for their sheep spiritually as well as physically. There is a challenging balance to that charge in times like this.

Along those lines it is obviously important that during this time hospitals remain open and function at a high level in order to care for the sick. Although we, as a church cannot function along those lines, we do view ourselves as a hospital for sick souls, and therefore feel that is important that we remain open and function at a high level. In a time of fear and panic, we desire to maintain as much normalcy as we possibly can. As of the writing of this statement, there have been only a dozen cases of those testing positive in the entire state of Arizona, with each individual either fully recovered, or currently recovering, with no deaths. We praise God for protection over our state. To our knowledge, our church body is in no immediate threat, and so long as that is the case, we intend to continue to meet with some added precautionary procedures. We as Elders feel that is our duty before God to make this decision, separate from the State. As of now, we have in no way been mandated to cease from gathering, but if we were, our stance is that it is not their role to make that decision for us. We are aware of faithful Pastors across the nation that have made the decision to cease gathering for worship for a time in order to prevent further spread of this virus. That is their decision to make for their congregations. Our position is in no way a condemnation on these Brothers. If at any point we felt our congregation was at risk, we would re-evaluate our response. This is something that we are actively monitoring, but as for now we desire to function as normal, with the following precautions:

- 1) We ask that if you are feeling sick in any way that you love your neighbor and stay home from church.
- 2) For those that attend service, we ask that you refrain from hugging or shaking hands until we are past this virus, which will come in time. We pray that it is sooner rather than later.
- 3) We will be taking precautionary measures for communion and the collecting of tithes and offerings, which will be explained at those times.
- 4) If you feel that you may have COVID-19 or have been in contact with some that has, please get tested. It is better to be safe than to be sorry.

Throughout history, it has always been the faithfulness of Christians that has carried cultures through times of widespread disease. We desire to do the same. May God allow us to be a city on a hill to our communities. Our culture is incredibly fearful of COVID-19 and is struggling to hold back all-out panic. Now is the time for reformation and repentance. Now is the time to lead calmly and peaceably, not fearing the virus, and trusting wholly in God. Now is the time to exhibit love for God and love for neighbor through our daily lives, attitudes, behaviors, and activities. Now is the time for the Gospel to go forth and to build Christ's Kingdom one soul at a time. The world is watching and listening. Will you join us?

Soli Deo Gloria,

Jeff Durbin, James White, Luke Pierson, and Zack Morgan

*Elders of Apologia Church, Mesa, AZ*