



200 Bicentennial Drive,
Agnes Water, 4677 QLD

Dear Church,

The elders have met this week to discuss the developing crisis of COVID-19 and how it will affect our church community. As you are well aware, our society has not had to deal with an infectious disease like this for 100 years, so there is no frame of reference and no one is really quite sure exactly what to do, corporately or privately.

Our leaders on every level are doing the best they can. However, we need to be prepared that COVID-19 will spread and eventually become a reality for at least some people, even here in the congregation.

The scuttlebutt is that the government will, at some stage, ask all public meetings take a break for a couple of weeks.

Please read/ listen to all this document as various concerns and objections will be addressed.

From the outset this is a remarkable opportunity to live out our faith and show the world the difference one's faith in Christ makes in their day to day lives especially as we face the Corona virus.

1. Don't worry!

Jesus orders us not to worry about tomorrow as every day has enough of its own concern. I suspect that a lot of people including Christians are worried about the future. We should not! We trust in Jesus that he will not fail us, that he is on our side, even with the COVID-19 virus.

While there is a difference between concern for others and worry, sometimes the line is blurry. We are very good at covering our sin. We may call it a concern for others when in fact we, understandably, are more scared and worried.

We need to remind ourselves this is not Christ's way. However, if you find yourself scared and worried -that's OK. After all this is why Jesus came to help us with our worry and to forgive us for our lack of trust.

So, use this time and ask: "Am I sinning by worrying about the situation?"

2. Submit to our authorities.

We are told in the bible to submit to those in authority. Make sure we do that. We know they are trying their best in an ever-changing situation. If and when the authorities advice isolation- make sure you isolate yourself. As a church we will be taking our cues as to what to do from the appropriate authorities.

3. Love others.

The Corona virus is a great opportunity to put this into practice. In this situation we love others by taking the right precautions. How do we love others in this situation?

- i. Don't be greedy and buy up all the toilet paper or canned goods. Remember Jesus came to serve and put other people first we should do the same.
- ii. Self isolate- even if you have a cold or flu symptoms it is best to isolate yourself. That way if it does turn out to be the virus you have done the right thing. Also, unfortunately, some people will start to panic if someone coughs and the loving response is to try to calm these people's concerns (even if they are unfounded some of the time).
- iii. Let the church know if you have or have come into contact with the virus.

Having to deal with panic, and shortages of food and other essentials, should encourage us to pray for, and help those for whom shortages like this are an everyday reality not just a temporary situation.

4. Be confident.

We'll all face death eventually. Thanks to Jesus, we can come to that day with confidence. Like Paul, we can remember that to live is Christ, but to die is gain (Phil 1:21). We truly have nothing ultimate to fear—not from the coronavirus or anything else. Obey Jesus. Jesus reminds us not to fear those that can kill the body (like COVID-19) but He that has power over death and the soul.

In other words, there are some things worse than death- facing the judgement of Christ. As a Christian, although death is considered to be an enemy, it is a defeated enemy because of what Christ did on the cross. We should fear God more than we fear the COVID-19 virus.

In a broken world, viruses come. In a broken world viruses will kill people and we ought not to be surprised at what is unfolding around us. Death is the inevitable outcome of our broken world.

So let me take this time to strongly encourage you to live a godly life as we face the Corona virus.

The Church's plan.

If someone has COVID-19, or suspects contact with someone who has COVID-19, we ask that they let us know ASAP. We will then contact the health department for advice, and we will contact all those people we can. Depending upon the health department's advice we will do whatever they say.

Being contactable is vitally important – that is why we have a church directory and ask ministries for the contact details of those people who come along. If the church hasn't got your details now is a good time to give them to us. Email Donna at donnsmaree@gmail.com

Effective immediately, all services and events will be held outside where possible. Seats will be spaced further apart than usual. We will also be attempting to stream the services on the church Facebook page for those who cannot attend in person. Rather than viewing individually, we encourage you to watch with family members or in small church groups where feasible. Church is defined literally as a gathering or assembly. Where possible, even in this time, we encourage you to gather where possible, even if it is within small groups.

Door welcomers will not be shaking hands, and newsletters or orders of service will be handed out using gloves. We encourage everyone in the church to refrain from physical contact with each other, especially if symptomatic.

Morning Tea will continue to be served at this point (though this is open to change). It will be served by a designated volunteer using individually wrapped food, or carefully prepared food using gloves the church will provide. Food, coffee and tea will no longer be a 'help yourself' affair.

Make sure you wash your hands frequently and often, especially after using the bathroom or preparing food. Don't wipe your hands on any tea towels or other towels.

Tissues and Sanitizer will be available at the back of the church for regular use.

Communion will continue at this stage, but once again will be prepared and handed out by a gloved volunteer. Likewise, though we especially encourage online giving during this time, a collection will still be taken by an adult volunteer who will not be passing the bag from person to person.

We are a family and if you self-isolate please let Dan, Adrian Chang or Donna know and we will contact you and ask what you need and how we can help.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Dan

on behalf of the elders.

Agnes Water Baptist Church

www.awbaptist.org.au

Service at 9.30am on Sundays

200 Bicentennial Drive, Agnes Water

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