

Being apart seems less than ideal but it does not have to threaten your walk with the Lord or your fellowship with other believers. In fact, it can deepen your understanding of what it means to 'be in the Lord's presence.' It can extend your testimony of the good news in ways you had not imagined; it can open hearts that were locked away...And it can heighten your desire for the time when all will be restored...and we're not just talking about a return to 'normal life' in this world...  
*we can have our desire sharpened for the restoration of all things.*

So what can we do while we are scattered, locked away, exiled, isolated ?  
I believe God is offering us **a unique opportunity to cultivate and strengthen our Spiritual closeness to Him:**

through prayer - examples from NT letters (Paul) -

*I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

*12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, 13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.*

Prayer is the outpouring of the heart...where your treasure is, there your heart will be also... if our treasure is Christ, then our heart will be drawn toward Christ, the head of our values, priorities and affections - and our affections in turn, will grow toward Christ's body, the Church. "Love Me, love My body - the church" **The foundation for turning your heart toward Christ and His body is to spend time in conversation with Him.**

through worship - worship is independent the outer environment, but dependent on inner perspective (heart focus). If I find that I need to be in a certain place; listen to certain music, etc., to enter into worship, then I must ask myself if it's about God's glory OR my needs.

*Worship can happen anywhere there is a believer who has contemplated or been met with God and experiences the compelling desire to give thanks; or speak highly of Him; or give honor to Him. Worship is not what is being done to us for an experience - it is **an expression offered to God for who He is.** This is why the worship God seeks is focused on the heart offering it rather than the mode in which it is offered. It may be a prayer, or a song, or a written diary entry; or an artistic work, or an act of service in Jesus Name... (Col. 3:17)*

through contact in creative/alternative ways (care at a distance during these times especially) in ancient times, this would have been a message (either written or verbally memorized) carried by a messenger from one to another - it might be affectionate; compassionate; concerned, etc.. But the subtext for these notes of care is always one of abiding love. This care at a distance (we can read it Paul's tone through his prayers), is an overflow of the love he has for Jesus. Reinforcing another dimension of Spiritual intimacy taking place through prayer.

through obedience - There are other aspects to our spiritual life that we cannot cover in a short time like this...but we must admit to ourselves - cultivating and strengthening spiritual intimacy with the Lord, won't happen if we're unwilling to do these -

because "it's just not the same without a Church building; or the music we like; or a group of people responding in 'real-time' to give us feed-back ! All of these are wonderful blessing and they have their place...but what does the body of Christ truly need to cultivate and strengthen spiritual intimacy? It needs to be connected to the head, which is Jesus Christ - and to readily receive from Him all that we need for growth - and in our growing up into Him, God is glorified.

Eph. 4:15-16