



## MERIDIAN CHURCH

March 18, 2020

Meridian Church,

It is with heavy hearts that your elders announce that we will not be gathering regularly on the Lord's day to worship for the next two weeks and are requesting that life groups not meet.

We do this in obedience to the word of our Lord which tells us, "let every person be subject to the governing authorities" (Romans 13:1). Our president and our governor have requested that there be no gatherings of groups larger than ten persons. If our civil authorities were asking us to disobey our Lord for unrighteous reasons, we would respectfully disobey them to reverently obey the King of kings. The elders do not believe the government's request is contrary to the command to not "neglect to meet together" (Hebrews 12:25); rather, it is in harmony with the command to love our neighbor.

Understanding the nature of this virus and how it should be addressed is something that the elders would not want to pretend we are either competent or commissioned to do. For this reason, we look to the proper authorities and weigh their advice in light of the truths of God's word. Our concern remains to shepherd you to live unto our Lord.

Such action by churches is not without historical precedent as shown in Caleb Morell's article ["How DC Churches Responded When the Government Banned Public Gatherings During the Spanish Flu of 1918."](#) During this outbreak, churches complied with the authorities, and also, as the death rate subsided, they petitioned for the ban on gathering to be lifted. Initially some tried to find a creative solution by gathering outdoors,

but this was soon banned also. The churches no doubt sharply felt the pain of not being able to assemble.

In reflection on this, the elders, while we desire to remain faithful in shepherding you, will not offer a substitute to corporate worship as we do not believe there is a substitute. While technology is a gift, we don't believe "church" is something that can be done online. We know all things come from the hand of our sovereign God. When our Lord wields the rod, we should not try to mitigate the pain. If the church is not able to gather, we believe she should sense the loss and cry out to her God in lamentation, contrition, and humility.

At the same time, we will be making recommendations and resources available for households to worship together on the Lord's day. While we always encourage fathers and husbands to lead and disciple their families, it is critical that they do so during this time. The elders want you to know that we are praying for you and that we are here to assist you in this stewardship.

Additional means of ministering to you through this time are being planned and will be announced soon.

Finally, let us be assured, that though our God may wield the rod, He does so in love. All things work together for good to those who love God. His love can be soft and it can be severe, but for His children, there is no condemnation and glory awaits.

"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all" (2 Thessalonians 3:16, ESV).

On behalf of the elders,

Grace and peace,

Josh King