

## Restarting Church Services

## 1 Peter

**1. What Happened**

- 1) Earlier this year a coronavirus (COVID-19) swept through the world and entered the USA.
  - Hundreds of thousands of people became ill and died
  - Hospitals—particularly in urban areas—became overwhelmed
  - Governments responded by enforcing “stay at home” regulations
  - The purpose of these regulations was...
    - (1) Not to keep people from getting sick (that’s impossible)
    - (2) But to slow the spread so health-care facilities would be able to provide care
- 2) In the USA, the federal government provided guidelines and protocols, leaving the practical side of things to each state.
- 3) On March 15 we voluntarily suspended church services. Since then the state of Ohio has enacted various orders and guidelines, yet never “shutting churches down.” For this we are thankful.
- 4) The intended aim of slowing the spread is happening, again, for this we are thankful.
  - The federal government has provided guidelines and protocols for “Opening Up America Again.”
  - “Non-essential” businesses are reopening, and men are finally getting haircuts

**2. When this started there were several concerns I had (none of which, frankly, involved physical death)**

- 1) Attitudes toward the virus
  - “We’re all going to die, it’s just a matter of time”
  - “I haven’t got it yet, people are making too big a deal of this”
- 2) Attitude toward government
  - They’re not doing enough
  - They’re Nazis and communists
- 3) Disunity in our church body over these issues, sadly manifested in disdain for one another
- 4) Some will fall away
  - Those whose walk with the Lord was weak, especially seen in poor attendance of church services

**3. What must we do? → 1 Peter**

- 1) Readers experiencing great suffering and persecution because they were Christians. They lived after Rome had burned, and Nero blamed the Christians for it.
  - Christians must be faithful to Christ in the fire of suffering
  - God’s grace is sufficient to keep living godly lives in times of persecution
- 2) Christians have a sure future, 1:2–2:10      *this is what keeps us grounded and going*
  - The **program** of salvation, 1:2–5 → election, salvation, preservation, eternal inheritance
  - The believers’ **problem**, 1:6–9 → grievous fiery trials
  - The believers’ **proof** and **responsibilities**: holiness, (13–16), reverence (17–21), and love (22–25)

## 3) Christians have definite obligations, 2:11–5:11

- (1) Live a holy life in public, 2:11–12
- (2) Submit to every ordinance, 2:13–16
- (3) Honor, love, fear, 2:17
- (4) Servants submit to masters, 2:18–25
- (5) Wives submit to husbands, 3:1–6
- (6) Husbands love wives, 3:7
- (7) Christians love one another, 3:8–12
- (8) Suffer like Christ did, 3:13–17
- (9) Live for God’s will and holiness, not your sinful desires, 4:1–4
- (10) Pray, 4:7
- (11) Love and serve one another, 4:8–11
- (12) Rejoice when suffering as a Christian, trusting the Lord, 4:12–19
- (13) Pastors faithfully shepherd the church, 5:1–4
- (14) All must be humble and submissive, 5:5–11
  - This is how Satan is resisted
  - This is how God is glorified

- Too often we hunt for exceptions instead of humbly obey God’s commands

- True submission will be just like Jesus’.

- (1) Is this true of my words and feelings?
- (2) Would Jesus say and do what I have?

## 4) How do we go forward? You and I must....

- (1) Be humble and submissive to God
- (2) Obey God and entrust our souls to him
- (3) Be holy as God is holy
- (4) Honor and obey governing authorities
- (5) Love and serve one another
- (6) Pray, praise, and preach Christ
- (7) Bless, not criticize/revile
- (8) Suffer for doing what is good, not evil

**4. Resuming Church Services**

The following is (hopefully) Scriptural, thus loving God and our neighbor and honoring our governing authorities. The various views and opinions range from “too much is being made of this” to “not enough is being made of this.” This translates into differing actions and attitudes, from “this is tyranny!” to “we’re going to die!”

These various opinions can be present in churches. Consequently, there will be opposing attitudes toward any proposals/protocols. It will be impossible to “please everyone.” As such Christ’s body must have Spirit-controlled responses toward others.

If someone is uncomfortable with attending, that is okay, the services will be recorded and uploaded to YouTube. If someone wants close personal contact in our services, they should submit to their leaders’ guidance (Heb 13:17) and restrict their desires so as not to offend others (cf. Rom 14–15).

## 1) Location of services

- Hopefully Windsor Community Center soon
- When weather permits, meet at church property, everyone brings their own chairs and hymnals
- When raining or cold, meet at a garage or barn, everyone brings their own chairs and hymnals

## 2) Service protocols

*These follow federal and state recommendations and laws. See the following for specifics:*

- <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/county-map.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>
- <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/>
- Meeting Place Specifics
  - (1) If meeting at a garage or barn you will need to “RSVP” to adequately plan seating
  - (2) Separate entrance and exit
  - (3) Have one individual open and close entrance and exit doors
  - (4) No bathrooms available (probably)
  - (5) Any materials will be “self-serve”; bring your own hymnal
  - (6) Seating must maintain social distancing by home units (6’)
  - (7) Dismissed by units
- Individual Responsibilities
  - (1) The elderly and “at risk” are advised to stay at home until early June
  - (2) Stay home if you are sick
  - (3) Cover coughs and sneezes either with a tissue or the crook of your arm
  - (4) No hand shaking or hugs. Maintain distance (6’) between non-related individuals. Give a friendly wave or a virtual hug :-)
  - (5) Recommended to use hand sanitizer when entering the building (will be supplied)
  - (6) You can but don’t have to wear a cloth face covering
  - (7) Don’t have close fellowship in parking lot (closer than 6’)

**Remember, this is temporary!**

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