

Churches Coping With COVID-19

by Edward O. Bragwell, Sr. others. No one is quick to criticize their position.

That the last few weeks have been a nightmare is an understatement. Everyone, in one way or the other, has been affected by Covid-19. Lives are being affected in ways our generation has never known. In addition to all the others, local churches of Christ are wrestling with ways to cope. How can we meet our responsibility to assemble and at the same time be in compliance with God's will and the orders of the powers that be?

May I be so forward as to offer a few thoughts on the subject, especially the matter of not being able to assemble with fellow saints and our need to honor the government's need to protect its citizens. We read suggestions that since we should "obey God rather than man" that we should simply ignore orders from governments and assemble anyway. We also read criticism of those who may have dismissed assemblies during this crisis.

In "normal" times we have a smaller scale version of this situation. On any given Sunday, we announce that some of our members have a "bug" and are at home. They seem to show improvement, but are still staying in because they are still may be contagious and do not want to spread it to others. They are even commended for their concern, not only for their health, but that of

What we have with Covid-19 is different in that not just a few, but every member has the problem of attending to his own ailments while avoiding spreading germs to others. The net result being that in order to avoid the virus and giving it others, they keep their distance – all recognized for years as prudent steps.

A few congregations are small enough and their meeting house large enough to spread families out keeping the required 6 feet distance with little problem - power to them for not having to dismiss previously scheduled assemblies. It takes a little extra work, but can be done.

On the other hand, larger groups cannot follow that course. They simply need to exercise the patience to keep their distance from one another, communicating the best they can while waiting and praying for things to return to where coming together is one place (1 Cor. 11:20; 14:23) is again feasible.

Let us all keep cool heads, show patience, demonstrate love and exercise reasonableness during these trying times. Above all keep the faith.



Quita Wilson (Amy Godwin's mom)	Jesse and Martha Godwin (Troy's parents)	Bob Simpson	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's grandfather)	Mary Edwards (Sandra Chason's mom)	Ellen Beth Ellis granddaughter of Decker's	Ruth Addison (April and Julie)
Danylu Burnett (Joanetta's mom)	Maria Williams	Betty McCall (Ken Sullivan's aunt)	Ashley England (Fitzsimmons' daughter)
Betty Bradford	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Earl & Ann Mitchell (Debbi Coleman's dad)	Ricky Decker, Jr (deployed)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	EB & Ara Belle Rich (Joanetta's uncle and aunt)	Mike Scaff (Ada Owen's brother)	Sandlyn Fultz
Kimzey Simpson (Bob's daughter-in-law)	William and Toni Herd	Emmett Brown (friend of Hosey's)	Chelsea Thomas (Anna Conner's friend)

May Birthdays

- 1-Dan Eison
- 2-Effie Kirby
- 2-Taylor Bethea
- 3-Paula Davis
- 7-Isaiah Messer
- 10-Ian Norman
- 10-Ryan Hasty
- 10-Branson Williams
- 11-Scott Perkins
- 12-Frances Humphrey
- 13-Anna Grace Long
- 13-Jana Hall
- 15-Bryce Daniels
- 17-Levi Diehl
- 18-Curran LaChappelle
- 18-Heydi Perez
- 20-Kaleigh Williamson
- 22-Sarah Bethea
- 23-Lillie Willingham
- 24-Andy Roberts
- 25-Chuck Hahn
- 26-Fallon Hartsell
- 27-Neri Powell
- 28-Malakai Powell
- 28-Barbara Weeks
- 28-Candy Long
- 29-Maria Williams

News and Notes

- ☒ - Please continue to pray for Will Reaves as he recovers from his recent accident.
- ☒ - Emmett Brown (friend of the Hoseys) got good news this week that his cancer has not spread!
- ☒ - Ryan Hasty's mom, Barbara, was able to return home this week and is weak but improved in her battle with an infection.
- ☒ - Laura Humphrey's dad, Frank Hand, is not doing well in his recovery from a recent surgery and may need additional surgery if not improved in 2 weeks.
- ☒ - Please pray for our expectant mother: Maura Powell!
- ☒ - Please pray for Erica and Bradley's sister -in-law, Heather Seymore, in the recent death of her father.
- ☒ - Congratulations to Daniel and Gracen (Sims) Carter who were married yesterday!
- ☒ - Please pray for Louise Pack (gmom of Christopher White and Anna Miller) in nursing home where virus cases are confirmed.
- ☒ - Please continue to pray for Will Reaves' friend, Betty Diaz in Mexico, who is still missing.

The Auburn Beacon



Volume 11, Issue 30

May 3, 2020

The Lord's Supper or a Marathon?

By Larry Rouse



Thoughts to Ponder

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. (1 Cor. 11:26)

On the night of His betrayal and in the very shadow of the cross itself, Jesus called his disciples together and expressed a strong desire of His heart. "Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; or I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'" (Luke 22:15-16) What made this particular Passover so important was that Jesus Himself would become the fulfillment of the Passover lamb the very next day as He would shed his blood for our salvation. Also, all disciples in every generation, would remember this event with Jesus as they partake of the Lord's Supper in the kingdom of God. When Jesus instituted this supper after partaking of the Passover, He was giving instructions that all who would ever love the Lord would also observe this supper with a strong fervor.

The early Christians were taught by the Apostle Paul, "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper,

One thing is for sure, your decision makes a statement. The more public that decision means the more public your statement is. Let this be what you proclaim "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." (1 Corinthians 11:26)

saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)

The occasion was a very serious one. Those who partake of this supper without a heart attuned to the meaning of Jesus' death and the great commitment that it demands, are in fact committing a great act of ingratitude and irreverence towards God, as well as hardening their own hearts during a time where it should have been made tender. "Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the

(Continued on page 2)

Elders
 Stacy Norman
 (334) 663-2382
 Walker Davis
 (334) 703-0050
 Larry Rouse
 (334) 734-2133

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday
 Bible Class 9:30 AM
 Worship 10:20 AM
 Evening Worship 6:00 PM

E-Mail:
 larryrouse@aubeacon.com

Larry Rouse
 Evangelist and Editor

Find us on the Internet: www.auchurch.com and www.aubeacon.com

(Continued from page 1)

Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" **(1 Corinthians 11:27-29)**. You can also show this irreverence in choosing not to attend.

The early church, through the instructions of the Apostles, made the Lord's Supper a centerpiece of their worship. On the Day of Pentecost, after Peter had preached the gospel and 3,000 were baptized, we read about the careful instruction these new disciples were given. "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." **(Acts 2:42)**

When the apostle Paul came to Troas, he met with the church there on the first day of the week and partook of the Lord's Supper with them. "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight." **(Acts 20:7)** Sunday, the first day of the week, is the day that Jesus was raised from the dead, the day that the Lord's Church was established **(Acts 2)**, and is the day that early Christians assembled to remember our Lord in this supper. As a Christian, when the first day of the week comes around, one should make plans and will give diligence to be with fellow Christians to remember our Lord.

How should we as Christians treat other events that would cause us to miss an assembly with Christians? Let me share with you a story. In the summer of 2001 I attended a very public news conference in downtown Birmingham where it was announced that a new Marathon was to be held in my hometown, the Mercedes Marathon. Running is my favorite sport and I had always wanted to be able to run a marathon in Birmingham but was unable to, since in the past, previous marathons were run on Sunday. I approached the man who would be in charge of the event and asked him on what day would the marathon be held. He replied that it would always be on a Sunday in February. My heart dropped and I knew that any future marathons for me would have to be in another town on a Saturday.

Did I make the right decision?

I have always believed that in serving the Lord, the priorities in my life are shown in decisions like these. In the Sunday morning assembly I am not only meeting with the saints for my edification, but the Lord Himself is there as well. He is the unseen presence when I sing, pray and partake of that sacred supper. Could I miss this occasion to participate in any sporting event? I cannot imagine any faithful Christian allowing worldly things like these to take a greater priority.

In the early 1980's there was a movie called "Chariots of Fire" that depicted a true story of a man who qualified to run in the Olympics, but discovered on the boat to the event that he would have to run a race on a Sunday. Under enormous pressure and public scrutiny, He refused to participate. While his reasoning that "Sunday is the Sabbath" was wrong, I did agree that his stand was correct. The world did not understand his stand and subjected him to ridicule and scorn, but those today who understand the nature of faith can identify with his stand.

Are those who wear the name of Christ today becoming ashamed of such a stand?

It is becoming more common to hear of Christians missing "just one service" to participate in local races, soccer games and other voluntary events. Sometimes they are raising money for a worthy cause and sometimes they are there to be with friends. Often family members and friends are invited to watch the game or assist in some other way. Those who are raising money often have websites, e-mails and handouts proclaiming what they are doing in advance and asking those to contribute money and to be in partnership with them.

Could not these things be done on another day? Going to another city to run a race on another day, or simply asking friends to donate to the cause without running the event are easy solutions among others. Our Children need to be taught the importance of priorities and miss games that conflict with the "Lord's team."

One thing is for sure, your decision makes a statement. The more public that decision means the more public your statement is. Let this be what you proclaim "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." **(1 Corinthians 11:26)**



Are We Trusting God or Testing God?

By Doy Moyer

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" **(Matt 4:5-7)**

Jesus quotes from **Deuteronomy 6:16**, where Moses is recounting the struggles of the children of Israel as they came out of Egypt and began to murmur and complain about not having water. They were not trusting God to take care of them, but instead tested God to try to force His hand. These two ideas tend to run counter to each other: if we are not trusting God, we will likely be testing Him. If we are not submitting to God, we may indeed be trying to manipulate Him to do what we want.

Jesus applied this principle to the situation He was facing. In the case of the devil tempting Him, it was not about wanting water and thinking to go back to Egypt; it was about whether or not God would keep Jesus from harm if He jumped off the pinnacle of the temple. The principle was the same, and it had to do with how He would handle a test of His own. The devil even quoted Scripture to make his case (just because Scripture is used is no guarantee it is being applied correctly).

Testing God can happen in a number of ways. We might be testing whether or not God will keep us safe in a certain circumstance, so we put ourselves in unnecessary danger. We might wonder if God will provide for us in some way, so we purposefully refuse to make reasonable provisions. We can even be testing God through our constant worries about daily provisions **(see Matt 6:24-33)**.

The open door for testing God appears to be when we ourselves are tested, tempted, and perhaps frustrated. If we get sick, for example, and are tempted to give up, how will we handle that? Will we shake a fist at God and think that if He really loves us He will make it go away? Will we put ourselves in His hands and rest on the notion that this situation may be a way to glorify God and influence others for good?

Trusting God does not mean that we do not need to plan, make provisions for the future, or take precautions in dangerous situations. It does mean that we do the best we can with what we have in line with what we know to be His will, make appropriate provisions, then not worry about it.

Trusting God does not mean that we do not need to plan, make provisions for the future, or take precautions in dangerous situations. It does mean that we do the best we can with what we have in line with what we know to be His will, make appropriate provisions, then not worry about it. We know that in whatever happens, He will take care of us **(cf. 1 Pet 5:5-6; Phil 4:4-7)**.

There were times when God's people were at serious risk. Daniel trusted God when threatened concerning his prayer life. Daniel's friends trusted God under threat of being cast into a furnace. Paul trusted God under threat of imprisonment and death. There are multiple examples. They were not throwing caution to the wind, but they were ready to suffer for the Lord.

Motivation is a key. Am I just trying to make some point, or am I truly trying to glorify God and show my love for others? Am I trying to bring attention to myself, or am I really pointing others to the Lord because I care about them? Am I testing whether God will do something for me in the time-frame I desire, or am I trusting that God will work things out in His own time and in His own way? Am I demanding some kind of sign to appear just as I say, or am I content to know that God is able to do far more abundantly beyond anything I can ask or think **(Eph 3:20)**?

My faith must not be conditioned so that it is strong only when things go the way that I think they ought to go. Instead, I must trust God no matter what the circumstances of life may bring. In the end, if I trust Him, I know that He will make it work out in the best possible way. For those who love Him and seek His will, He makes things work for the good, even when what is happening is not what we might prefer **(cf. Rom 8:28)**. Suffering for the cause of Christ is included **(cf. 1 Pet 4:1; Phil 3:10)**.

When Paul faced particularly dangerous circumstances, he considered himself delivered by God "from the lion's mouth." Yet he also saw that there was ultimate deliverance coming: "The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen." **(2 Tim 4:18)**

