

## Two or Three

These are difficult times; the Elders have a responsibility for our spiritual health but they also have a responsibility for our physical wellbeing as well. The coronavirus poses a real threat to the health, and even the lives, of our members and any who may visit with us. We know that the early church took actions to preserve the lives of the Christians. When persecution became rampant in Jerusalem the church dispersed to Samaria and Judea. Luke recorded this for us in **Acts 8:1 (KJV)** *“And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.”* We also know that Paul took precautions as well, **Acts 9:23-25 (KJV)** *“And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.”* Because of these examples and the real and present danger to our members, the Elders have made the difficult decision to cancel all worship and Bible studies through and including April 5, 2020. They will assess the health risks to our members and reconsider this decision early in April.

But while these two examples indicate a concern for the wellbeing of the early Christians, including Paul, they also give us another example that we need to consider. This is that when the disciples were forced to take action to protect their lives they continued to worship and study the scriptures. This is something we need to do during this time. While we cannot come together as a congregation for a while, we can and should continue to worship God and study His word. In Acts we see several instances where only a few people were either studying or worshipping together. Consider Phillip and the Eunuch, or Saul and Ananias.

It is certainly true that coming together as a congregation is much better, it is also true that we can worship and study our Bibles at home. In fact we have examples of this happening. Consider the following; **Romans 16:3-5 (KJV)** *“Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.”*; **1 Corinthians 16:19 (KJV)** *“The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.”* And **Colossians 4:15 (KJV)** *“Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.”* And finally **Philemon 1:2 (KJV)** *“And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:”* These passages let us know that it is acceptable to worship in private homes. So while the Elders have suspended our coming together as a congregation on Sunday mornings, evenings and Wednesday evenings during the next couple of weeks in a real and valid concern for our physical health, none of us should neglect our spiritual health during this time. We can and should study and worship at home.

We can all sing songs in praise of God. If you don't have a songbook at home, you probably know at least the first verse of several songs. If you cannot remember them, there are sites on the internet that include the words of numerous songs. Search for “Songs of Praise” or go to [www.hymnary.org](http://www.hymnary.org). Both sites have the texts of songs available that you can use.

We can also all pray at home, in homes where there is no Christian male it is perfectly correct for the women to lead prayer. You should not neglect this aspect of worship simply because you are a woman. In addition, we can all read our bibles at home as well. Once again if there is no Christian man in the home, the Christian woman can and should lead in this area as well.

On Sundays we should participate in the Lord's Supper. There are recipes for making unleavened bread online. Go to [Allrecipes.com](http://Allrecipes.com), or search for unleavened bread recipes to find them. Making unleavened bread is not difficult and it can be stored for a while. Then all you will need is to buy a bottle of grape juice, and have an attitude of respect and reflection for the sacrifice that Jesus made for us as you do when you take the communion at our

regular services. There is another aspect of worship that should be done on each Sunday and not neglected just because you are worshiping at home. This is the commandment that Paul gave to lay by in store. In a situation like we find ourselves in you can make your normal contribution at home then bring it and put it into the offering tray when we are able to come back together.

In addition to conducting services at home, you can tune into our Sunday morning radio program at 9:00 AM on 99.7 FM and listen to the lesson given there. There are also opportunities to participate in TV worship services should you rather do that than conduct services on your own. Another option is for one or two families to get together using the speaker app of your phones, or even Facetime, to worship together that way.

Yes, it is true that these are difficult times, but in comparison to what our brothers and sisters faced in the first years of the church we are still living in ease and safety. After all we are not being arrested, thrown into dungeons, and killed for our beliefs. We will make it through this because God loves us. And if it happens that one or two of us do get sick and die, we have confidence that we have a home prepared for us by Jesus Himself (John 14:1-4).

While we are not meeting together for a few weeks, keep the faith, study hard, check on each other and continue to worship. And be confident in your eternal destiny.