

Thank you for joining us for a time of devotion and prayer. Every day we hear more information how the virus is affecting the world and our own neighborhoods. In our time together today, we want to talk about specific things that we can do to help one another in this time of need.

Please spend time on the phone calling those that you know who are self-quarantined. It is so good to connect to others outside of our homes and places of work in healthy ways. Hearing another person's voice can be so uplifting and it does not have take that much of your time. God can use the virus to draw us closer together in Christ as we converse one with another over the phone. I certainly enjoy these conversations and I know some of you have the ability to pray over the phone with another person and this too can be so uplifting. You just might be the best part of the day for the person or persons that you call. Please do it. I think it is much more personal to phone a person than to send a text or email but now I am showing my age so let's move on to the next point.

Some people feel it necessary not to leave their homes for obvious reasons. We as a church wanting to show Christian love to our neighbors can volunteer to go grocery shopping or to the pharmacies to pick up what is essentially needed, including toilet paper. We all have neighbors who are more susceptible to the virus who would greatly appreciate a knock on the door from someone they know by name and by face. Yes, it is good and safe to keep what is called "social distance". I went online today and found on Amazon that they are selling toilet paper at a decent price. This of course will be delivered to your own home. It is amazing how the virus is impacting the stores and the strange things people are choosing to hoard.

Another idea is if it is warm enough, go for a walk outside. Being outside has a way of lifting one's spirits and doing exercise at the same time. There are so many beautiful things to look at and it can get your mind on more positive things to think about. Breathing in fresh air

can be exhilarating. Some of you may hear this and chuckle a bit and if that is the case it is always good to laugh.

A very dear friend and mentor one told me, "Pastor, people ignore God and the church until something happens in their lives that effects them in the pocketbook." Erhardt Prange spoke those words almost 30 years ago and he is now with the Lord Jesus. I bring this up because we are praying that God will use the uncertainty of our time to draw people to that which is certain and never changes. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore (Hebrews 13:8). Friends, this world is passing away and everything in it. There is only one Certain, one Way, one Truth, and one Life and that is Jesus the Christ. Everyone else and everything else will let us down and disappoint us but never Jesus. Everything Jesus does is good and right. Jesus has everything that we need, including the inner resources that strengthen us on the inside, namely His grace. God's grace is sufficient for everything. The virus does not lessen the power of God in our lives. The virus can be used to show us how vulnerable and weak we are and how wise it is to depend on God for everything. The Bible tells us apart from God we can do nothing.

Monday I was at Dunkin' Donuts getting coffee and there was a person waiting in the carryout line, as was I. She began expressing all her resentments and fears regarding the virus. She went on and on and on. My heart went out to her because the look in her eyes was one of utter terror. She was sinking fast with nothing underneath to hold her up. She looked like a person drowning in the ocean, looking for someone to save her from drowning.

The Bible says, "You are loved with an everlasting love and underneath are the everlasting arms." Yes, as Christians we can find ourselves sinking but only so far because underneath us are God's arms that hold us tight and will not let us drown. God has always provided for you in the past and that will never stop. May the Lord Jesus use these difficult days to cause us as a nation to humble ourselves before God, repent of our sins, seek God's face,

receive God's forgiveness so healing will come to our land (2 Chronicles 7:14). And let us pray to that end.

Dear Heavenly Father we come into your throne of grace to find your grace and mercy in this time of need. We humble ourselves before you acknowledging that we are sinners in need of your forgiveness. May the entire nation bow down to you and give their lives to you. Lord please use these difficult times to wake people up to see how much they need You and that You are the only God. Tough times show us our idols and how foolish we are to lift these idols above You. Lord, please stop the virus worldwide and we thank you in advance for the good you will bring out of all of this. Please richly glorify yourself. This we pray in the name of Jesus . Amen.

Isaiah 43:1-3(NLT) ¹“Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. ²When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. ³For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. This is God's word to you today. Amen and Amen.