

Compass Bearing #10
Devotions to Navigate the Coronavirus Pandemic
“People Matter” by Pastor Mark Ellcessor
Tuesday, April 14, 2020

Quite often I used to joke, “Ministry would be great, if it weren’t for people.”

I was wrong.

This whole thing of sending out digital devotions and doing wired worship and communicating virtual values stinks. Give me people, warts and all.

Two days ago we had Easter online. Last night we did a Zoom church board meeting. Today (a Tuesday) is usually the day we pack the Selma staff into my office for a time of Bible study, prayer, calendar planning, and ministry dreaming. And tonight our Life Group, led by Cindy Smith, is meeting via Zoom (or is it Zumba?).

Yes, we still had Easter worship. Yes, the board continues to strongly guide the church. Yes, the church staff keeps on faithfully working – some from their offices, some from their own homes, all from both at times. Yes, Life Groups, Bible Studies, and other ministries are marching on, even if from a distance.

But it isn’t the same. Give me a packed sanctuary on Easter. Give me a full meeting room with a dozen board members sitting shoulder to shoulder around a table. Give me an office crammed full with eager staff members. Give me a gathering space where our Life Group members can be fully present with one another.

It turns out, I really need people. Truthfully, we all do.

Just try to carry out these commands of the Bible without people:

- “Love one another” (John 15:17)
- “Be devoted to one another” (Romans 12:10)
- “Honor one another above yourselves” (Romans 12:10)
- “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you” (Romans 15:7)
- “Instruct one another” (Romans 15:14)
- “Serve one another in love” (Galatians 5:13)
- “Carry each other’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2)
- “Be kind and compassionate to one another” (Ephesians 4:32)
- “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21)
- “Do not lie to each other” (Colossians 3:9)
- “Bear with each other” (Colossians 3:13)
- “Forgive... one another” (Colossians 3:13)
- “Admonish one another” (Colossians 3:16)
- “Encourage each other” (I Thessalonians 4:18)
- “Build each other up” (I Thessalonians 5:11)
- “Spur one another on toward love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24)
- “Confess your sins to each other” (James 5:16)
- “Pray for each other” (James 5:16)
- “Live in harmony with one another” (I Peter 3:8)
- “Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” (I Peter 4:9)

I’ve often heard people say, “I believe in God, I just don’t believe in the Church.” Translated into pastor speak, that means, “Ministry would be great, if it weren’t for people.”

You can’t have God without the people of God. Same for ministry.

People need the Lord. Truth is, people need each other.

Prayer: Thank you God for people. Bless you for creating each person. I am more aware than ever how important people are in my life. Please bring an end to this pandemic very quickly. I look forward to being together with people as soon as possible. And thank you God for sustaining me as I wait patiently to be with others. Amen.