

Our Plan For Re-Gathering Following The Coronavirus

Grace Community Baptist Church

Wednesday, April 29, 2020

Grace Family,

As we look ahead to May and into the summer of 2020, we are very excited to see how God continues to work through His church. Although these past couple of months may have been confusing and fearful at times to us, we know that God is working in this situation for His glory. Let us set our focus on the glory of the Great I AM!

The leadership of Grace Community Baptist Church has had multiple meetings in making decisions about how to approach the coming weeks (and possibly months). Please understand that these plans are all *tentative* based on what we understand about the spread of the virus in the coming weeks. I pray that you will hold on to Proverbs 19:21 — *“Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.”*

These plans have been carefully thought through and were given much prayer. We have had numerous conversations with other churches, state leaders and experts in the medical field. We understand that not everyone will agree with the decisions, but we ask that you trust this is in the best interest of Grace Community Baptist Church. We also understand that other churches may have different plans than we do, and we ask that there is no judgement placed on them or us. Instead, let there be thanksgiving in our hearts, that we may have another opportunity to meet together as a body of believers.

The Goal

Although it is easy for us to use the phrase “get back to normal,” I pray that we never reach the point of “normal” again. Instead, this crisis should light a fire and passion in our hearts to pursue Christ with more vigor than ever before. It is not the time to revert back to who we were two months ago. I pray that you have used this time to grow in your spiritual walk. It is not the time to become comfortable once again. I pray that you embrace the opportunities that have been given to us and no longer take anything for

granted. It is not the time to shy away from what you believe and why you believe it. I pray that now more than ever you will prepare yourself to take the Gospel to the world. The world is confused. The world is scared. The world has no hope. But we do! And now is one of the greatest opportunities we, as believers, have ever been afforded to be Ambassadors of Christ and share the Gospel with all whom God places in our paths. Now is the time!

Our goal is for Grace Community Baptist Church to grow more in love with Jesus, to find more joy in the gathering of the saints, to be more at peace in this world, and to become more humble in trusting in the Sovereignty of God. The goal is not to “get back to normal.” The goal is to pursue the glory of God now more than ever. I pray that you will join me!

The Plan Part 1

May 1-16

- **Sundays (May 3 & 10)**
 - 10:00am Online Service Only.
- **Abide Daily**
 - We will continue to encourage you to be in the Word with our Abide Daily videos.
- **Zoom Bible Studies (May 1, 8 & 15)**
 - We will continue to host 8:30pm Zoom Bible Studies on Friday evenings. JOIN US!
- **Small Groups/Discipleship Groups**
 - We want to emphasize connecting with one another through your Small Groups, Sunday School Classes and Discipleship Groups.
 - You can do this through Zoom, Texting, Phone Calls and so much more!
- **Wednesdays (May 6 & 13)**
 - We will be Live on the GCBC Website and App @ 7:00pm.

The Plan Part 2

May 17-31

- **Sundays (May 17, 24 & 31)**
 - 10:00am Worship Service inside of our building.
 - No child care will be available (details on page 3).

- We will sit 6 feet apart from one another, have hand sanitizer available and encourage you to bring a mask if you feel it necessary.
- 10:00am Online Service will also be available on our website.
- **Abide Daily**
 - We will continue to encourage you to be in the Word with our Abide Daily videos.
- **Small Groups/Discipleship Groups**
 - We want to emphasize connecting with one another through your Small Groups, Sunday School Classes and Discipleship Groups.
 - You can do this through Zoom, Texting, Phone Calls and so much more!
- **Wednesdays (May 20 & 27)**
 - We will be Live on the GCBC Website and App @ 7:00pm.

The Plan Part 3

June and continuing...

- **Sundays (June 7, 14, 21 & 28)**
 - 10:00am Worship Service inside of our building.
 - We will re-evaluate childcare in late May, but there is a great possibility that childcare will not be available in June (details on page 4).
 - 10:00am Online Service will also be available on our website.
- **Abide Daily**
 - We will continue to encourage you to be in the Word with our Abide Daily videos.
- **Small Groups/Discipleship Groups**
 - We want to emphasize connecting with one another through your Small Groups, Sunday School Classes and Discipleship Groups.
 - We encourage you to begin to resume meeting together in person starting in June.
- **Wednesdays (June 3, 10, 17 & 24)**
 - We will be Live on the GCBC Website and App @ 7:00pm.

3 Primary Questions to Consider:

1. “Governor Stitt said that we could meet May 3, so why aren’t we?”

- First of all, we were never restricted from gathering together as a group of believers. We were advised to not gather, but it was never made a law that we could not gather. The reasons we chose not to gather were: 1) to be cautious and smart about the physical health of our church members, 2) to be a good neighbor to those around us, and 3) to prevent spreading the virus that we knew very little about.
- Secondly, **we are contracting with professional cleaning services to do a thorough “deep clean” of our entire facilities prior to reopening the church building.** We are taking every precaution to make sure that our building is cleaned and sanitized from top to bottom to alleviate any concerns when we open our GCBC church campus and welcome everyone back for our 10:00am service on Sunday, May 17.
- Lastly, just because our building isn’t opened does not mean that our ministry is closed!! We are still ministering to one another. We are still ministering to our neighbors. We are still focusing on taking the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. We are still pursuing the holiness of God together. Our ministry is opened... that never closed!

2. “If we can meet together, why no child care in May and June?”

- Even though we will be meeting together on Sunday mornings starting May 17, we will be distancing ourselves by 6 feet. We will encourage families to sit together and for families to distance from other families by putting a row or a few chairs in between.
- This concept is simply not possible in a nursery. It is just not practical for our 2-and-e-year-olds to social distance from one another. A closed nursery is a safety precaution we believe is warranted as we resume church life together.
- A large percentage of our gathering each week is kids under 7 years old. That is a BLESSING! I love the sound of the kids

running through the halls and in the Fellowship Hall! But in no way do I want to endanger any of the kids by putting them in harm's way.

3. “What if I am nervous about attending church before September or beyond?”

- In NO WAY should anyone feel judged for wanting to stay in during this phase-in period — especially if you have a weak immune system or are in a high risk category. We want to encourage everyone who feels chooses not to be in a large gathering right now to stay home. BUT, let me highly encourage you to devote yourself to our times of worship by watching online.
- We will be making every service available Live on our website in the coming weeks. You will be able to be a part of the service from your home until you feel that it is safe to gather with your fellow believers in your church home!

Setting Our Eyes On Jesus

“1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:1-2

My prayer for our church throughout this crisis has been that we would not allow the entrapments of this world to entangle us from running to Jesus. These past two months have been a true test for your faith. How did you do? Did you remain fearful? Were you anxious? Or did you pursue Christ relentlessly in His Word? Did you find peace and refuge in the Cleft of the Rock?

Over the course of the next few weeks, and possibly months, we as a church body at Grace Community Baptist Church have the opportunity to proclaim the Glory of our Jesus Christ by preaching the Gospel of Sufficiency. I hope you can stand in front of the world and proclaim that Jesus Christ is ALL that

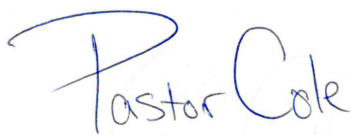
you need. I pray that you can stand on the highest mountain and shout that Jesus Christ is Lord of All! We have the opportunity and the responsibility to not only pursue the holiness of God in our own spiritual walk, but to “walk as children of Light” in order to bear fruit, so that the world can know Jesus Christ.

Will you join me in setting your eyes on Jesus in a way that you have never done before? Will you allow this time of suffering to shape you in a way that is more like Jesus? Will you covenant with me to devote your life to the ministry of reconciliation, that each of us may be true Ambassadors of Jesus Christ to the world around us?

I pray that you would not only join me in this effort, but that you would bring others along with you. Look around and see who God has put in your life, that they may be able to experience the glory of God. Look around and see who God has put in your life, that they may know what it means to be a part of the body of Christ. Look around and see who God has put in your life, that they may experience the fullness of Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

I love each of you and am praying for you daily. If you have any questions about the plans I’ve outlined, please ask me. I am here for you! There is no reason at all that you should wonder about anything we are doing at Grace Community. I will answer any question — and if I do not know the answer, I will find it out.

With all love and sincerity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pastor Cole". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cole Cleveland
Pastor
Grace Community Baptist Church