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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: March 18, 2020  
TO: Pastors  
FROM: Scott Gillum  
SUBJECT: Covid-19 Actions

***“And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” (II Chronicles 12:32, KJV).***

***“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (II Timothy 1:7 NKJV).***

***“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue” (II Peter 1:2-3a, NKJV).***

Fear is a reality, but fearfulness comes from unhealthy emotions that paralyze life. God’s ***“divine power”*** has given us ***“all things”*** necessary to thrive in ***“life and godliness”*** for every fear that may arise in and around our life.

At this time in our nation, we may experience fear, yet the spirit of fear is combated and defeated with His divine power. That divine power that enables us to make wise decisions, balanced with love for others that produces soundness of mind. It will be this soundness of mind that impacts the world.

We will not allow fear to become a spirit that drives unwise decisions toward selfishness and instability. Instead, we receive God’s power balanced by love for others, which produces stability in unstable times. We will accept the appropriated power mentioned above, knowing ***“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear” (I John 4:18, NKJV).***

In light of what is occurring globally, I ask that you prayerfully consider the above thoughts while seeking God for His guidance. These statements provide direction for pastors, leaders, and churches as we walk through uncertain, changing circumstances.

In consultation with the North American Presbyter, State & Regional Bishops of North America, Regional & District Bishops, State Office Staff, and Student Ministries Team, we believe our appropriate response is to postpone all **STATE** scheduled activities as noted below:

- GOLDEN AGERS REUNION
- REGIONAL & STATE TEEN TALENT COMPETITIONS
- FAMILY FEST
- OVERSEER TRAVEL WILL CEASE

*(While the State Bishop will not be traveling, he and Brenda will maintain office hours as usual.)*

Likewise, **local church gatherings for the next 15 days should cease:**

- SUNDAY SERVICES
- MIDWEEK SERVICES

Pastors must practice wisdom regarding personal contact with his/her congregants. Only in extreme cases should you have close contact. Some hospitals are not allowing visitors. If you go, check with the facility beforehand to ensure entrance. It remains the responsibility of the church to care for the people appropriately, however, not in a manner that would place others at risk. While you may not be at risk, you could carry the virus to others who are susceptible. As government officials admonish, stay in when possible as to lessen the curve of spreading of this virus.

I ask that you comply with federal, state, and local government recommendations. Comply with their recommendation regarding more than 10 gathering rule for the next 15 days.

The goal of the Church of Jesus Christ is to build up and increase the body of Christ. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, ***“From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:16, NKJV).***

In 1665, the University of Cambridge temporarily closed due to the bubonic plague. Isaac Newton had to work from home and used this time to develop calculus and the theory of gravity. Newton, locked away with his intellect and academic prowess, produced significant assets to the world.

We believe this season can potentially be one of the finest hours for our churches as we evaluate ‘what’ and ‘how’ we do what we do. Our actions can be a platform for significant ministry.

I challenge you to lock away with Holy Spirit to find ways in which you can fulfill the goal of building up and increasing the body of Christ through other options beyond traditional gatherings. We are endeavoring to provide a step-by-step process that you might consider using Facebook Live for sermons and Bible Studies.

We will be streaming live from the State Office on Sunday morning, 11:00 AM until churches assume their regular meeting schedule. The live feed or video is accessible from the state website [www.flcogop.com](http://www.flcogop.com). This live stream will provide churches who do not have the capability of the live stream an opportunity to connect as a church family.

Obviously, as a pastor, you must explore additional directives regarding tithing and giving. Is it best for your local church to give by mail or online giving? The days and weeks ahead will remain fluid, therefore, consider what might work for your particular church. As a spirit-empowered community of faith, spontaneous actions based on the guidance of the Holy Spirit will enable us to move forward.

God is going to use this season as a defining moment for our movement, the Church of God of Prophecy, in Florida.

When the people took up stones to stone Jesus, his response was, ***“Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”*** Yet the people . . .

***“took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by” (John 8:58-59, NKJV).***

Notice that Jesus ***“hid himself.”*** Why? Because it was not time for him to be killed. Stoning was not the plan of God. Jesus hiding was not a lack of trust in the Father; it was an act of assurance knowing the Father had plans for Him in the future.

***“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel”  
(Ephesians 6:13-19, NKJV).***

As we respectfully follow the guidelines of government officials regarding gatherings, ***“doing all to stand”*** we can, in faith, stand that the fulfillment of the plan of God in our lives will be in the will of God to edify and increase the community of faith.

**On April 2<sup>nd</sup>**, after the appropriate evaluation is completed updated guidance will be provided.