



18th March 2020

Dear Church,

As we said on Sunday, we serve a big God who is with us. It is firstly to Him that we want to be faithful. We also want to be good and responsible citizens, this is what God expects from us. As I mentioned last Sunday in a letter you received with your bulletin we are following advice from our Australian Government, Australian health authorities, and our Baptist Association.

This morning (18/03/2020) Prime Minister Scott Morrison has banned 100 people or more meeting indoors and have instructed all group gatherings, regardless of size, to practice social distancing of 1.5 meters.

After carefully considering these new directions we have decided to cancel Sunday Church Service, and gatherings where these two injunctions will be difficult to fulfil. The Hunter Connect Day for Family ministry leaders has also been cancelled. Baptist Care Services have also ceased their lunches, cafe service, group activities and other gatherings. They are currently considering what they will be able to offer given the restrictions and compliance placed on them. We will keep you informed as to what they will be doing.

We too are planning how we can still be church without gathering together on Sunday morning and in homes. To do this, we will be utilising the website, facebook, mail outs, phone calls and pastoral visits. I will be encouraging small groups (less than 20), such as home groups to meet in the main auditorium which is big enough to maintain a 1.5metre distance from each other. Our aim is to put more content on the web site for you to access. We will do the same with facebook and on Sunday mornings at 9:30am I hope to have a live stream where I will deliver a short message and time of prayer. And above all I am relying on us as a community to take the initiative and maintain connection one with another. Please, phone people who are on your heart, check up on them, write cards of encouragement, watch out for each other and be creative in how we can support one another through this period of forced isolation.

We are not sure how long we will be required to 'shut down' like this. Scott Morrison mentioned 6 months, however, if virus transmission can be contained quickly many are hoping it will be much less. I guess time will tell. If you are finding self-isolation and social distancing difficult, please contact a friend, home group leader or myself. My phone number is 0405 325 833. I am happy to talk and even visit.

I want to remind you again that God is still present with you and us. He is still at work! And He is able to bring much good out of this difficult time. Lets remind ourselves of that great truth, found in Romans 8:28. **“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose...³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?...³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

Yours in Christ.

Dean



WALLSEND BAPTIST CHURCH

BELONG - BELIEVE - BECOME

58 COWPER ST. WALLSEND