

**Isolating together:** Good Afternoon everyone! Are we having fun yet?

I just left a meeting of pastors, (12 of us (even sounds Biblical) from the region. Just to assure you all this was a zoom conference call! So we practiced what we preached and stayed within the government guidelines for socially distancing. We prayed together, we checked in with each other (soul care), we framed our discussion theologically (As theologians are want to to do), we shared ideas and best practices for such a time as this! From this meeting I have come up with a few thoughts for us all.

1. **the importance of the gathered body.** Extraordinary times, call for extra-ordinary measures. We are doing church differently because we have to. We are thinking outside the box, getting creative, leveraging technology, having community in isolation. But by God's grace this will only be for a time and season. But make no mistake the church is a corporate gathering of all of us together. **So don't get use to the idea of not going to church,** or doing church from the comfort of you homes. It's maybe fun for a season to go to church in your pj's, and not worry about combing your hair (which I don't understand the need), or getting all cleaned up, not having to deal with crowds. But the Bible says - do not give up meeting together (Hebrews 10:25). If it seems strange not to gather at the same time, at the same place, with the same people It's because it is not natural. Corporate worship is part of what it means to be the body of Christ.

2. **The Church in Exile:** The church has always been in exile throughout her history. This time of being unable to gather has been the reality of Christ's body throughout history. Whether we are talking about Adam and Eve - east of Eden, or Israel in Babylon, or the the New Testament believers scattered throughout the world, the persecuted church has always been dealing with the tension of living between the 'already and the not yet'. A fitting metaphor to describe our times is that we are like prisoners of war - trying find creative ways of communicating and sharing lives.

3. **Family Worship:** This will be my final thought (though I have so many more that I would love to share.) I would encourage all of us to continue gathering at the same time every Sunday (9:30 a.m and/or 5:00 p.m.) for family worship (by family - I am not just thinking - dad, mom, and children - yes them but also friends, small groups etc.). Sing Songs, Confess sins, pray together, listen to God's Word proclaimed. We will try to have a 'mini service' put together for Sunday (Go to our Website - [racinecrc.org](http://racinecrc.org) and follow the links ).

Hope you are encouraged today. Enjoy this time and season of growth as God stretches us and challenges us, and forms us by his Word and Spirit, to become more and more like Jesus (James 1:1-5)

Finally - Just thought I'd share the latest photo of our Grandson Calvin, who give us many reasons to smile and thank God in this season of our isolation. Enjoy the pic and please find occasion to laugh and enjoy the new routine.

May God bless you all and keep you healthy in every way!

Soli Deo Causa,

Pastor Anson