

Preparatory Scripture Reading

1 Peter 2:13-20 *“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king. Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it; this finds favor with God.”*

1 Timothy 2:1-6 *“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgiving, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.”*

Romans 13:1-7 *“Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience’ sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.”*

Updated WBC Operational Plan through May 11th

On April 23, 2020, Governor Roy Cooper signed executive order no. 135, extending the stay at home order until 5 pm on May 8th. Gov. Cooper has laid out a phased plan to re-open North Carolina based on metrics under the guidance of the Federal Government, in particular the CDC. Being that “mass gatherings” are included in this order we feel it best represents Christ for us to continue our virtual gatherings through at least May 10th, re-visiting our plan forward up until that point.

Please understand it is our great desire to gather together once again as a church body in one place, fellowshiping, singing, praying, and studying God’s Word with each other. We would like to offer some of our reasoning behind staying with the plans as laid out by our state government.

- In the 1 Peter 2 passage we see that submitting ourselves to our governing authorities has a two-fold purpose: First, horizontal; to the people around us, “For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.” Second, vertical; it finds favor with God (v. 20)
- In 1 Peter 2, we also see a very clear posture for God’s people, “Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.”
- In 1 Timothy 2:1-6 we see that we should pray for our leaders SO THAT we “may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.” That (praying for all men, for all who are in authority) is “good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior...”
- Romans 13 opens with the truth that we are to be subject to governing authorities and all authority is from God, established by God.

Considering these Scripture passages and others, we can be confident that God, sovereign over all creation, has known from before the creation of all that exists that we all would be alive during this time and living in this state of North Carolina (Acts 17:26), and that He did so with a purpose. Being placed in circumstances we may not necessarily like, recognizing that much of the framework of our American existence may be crumbling around us, we have an opportunity, first, to recognize God is still in control and to trust Him and, second, to respond in such a way that the world (the people in our respective spheres of influence) may see how we respond and be drawn to Christ. Our very posture and response may be the only, or best, representation of Christ that a person may ever see or hear.

Another thing to consider is the reality of these circumstances and how they impact our response. In reality, these circumstances (being told from the state government we can't gather together physically) are not oppression against our Christian faith, in particular our expression of it. To further understand our response, for example, if the government (state or federal) was telling us we couldn't preach the Bible, couldn't read Scripture, couldn't talk about marriage or sexuality, as examples, our response would be very different. While we are unable to gather together physically, the government is not preventing us from preaching the Gospel, proclaiming the truths of Scripture, or being who we are- the Church. While that day may (or may not) come at some future point in this country, that is not what is happening now.

We should all be seeking God and examining our lives to see where we can trust Him more, where we need repentance, where we can increase our prayer life (for our leaders, for our family members and friends), where our lives can be reshaped to more resemble His way of life. This examination needs to be done personally, in our homes, and with our families. Thankfully, we have the technology to allow us to do so virtually as a congregation, a family of families. When the day comes that we can gather together again physically, the celebration will be glorious.

Finally, we recognize this decision has the potential to raise concerns with some people. Let us offer some thoughts on that as well. The world is filled (perhaps now more than ever) with divisiveness and dissension. That is not the way of the Church. One of the beauties of Waxhaw Bible Church is our diversity in denominational background as well as political leaning. May it never be said of our people that we are unable to have loving, civil conversations about controversial topics, however serious they may be. Our posture, individually and corporately, must be of love, grace, mercy, and compassion, for each other and the community around us.

That said, we would like to offer an opportunity to discuss these things virtually. Next Thursday night, May 7th at 7:00 pm we will have a virtual meeting as a church family to discuss the current situation and the plan moving forward, allowing time for questions and feedback from you. This conversation will require that posture of love, grace, mercy, and compassion, so we ask that you begin praying now for yourselves and others that we might exemplify the likeness of Christ even in this conversation. We plan on recording this meeting and making it available for those who are unable to attend. An invite with login instructions will be sent early next week.

Please know that your church family stands at the ready. If you or your family has a need (financial, physical, etc.) please let us know.

We love you all, we pray for you daily. Please understand these decisions are not made without prayer and thoughtful consideration, seeking God's wisdom for our local fellowship. If you have comments, feedback, or questions, please feel free to email us at elders@WaxhawBibleChurch.org

Together in Christ,

The Elders of Waxhaw Bible Church