



## Purley Baptist Church

13 March 2020

Dear sisters and brothers

I am writing to you having just listened to the Government's latest statement about the Coronavirus outbreak. It appears that we are facing a very turbulent and difficult time over coming weeks and months. We all react differently to these sort of events but, like me, I'm sure you aspire to living out your faith in the Lord Jesus in the face of this challenge. Here are my suggestions as to how we should react:

Firstly, and most importantly for us Christians, we should be praying earnestly. Michele Bailey has drawn up a list of prayer points which you can access at [www.purleybaptist.org/prayer](http://www.purleybaptist.org/prayer). Furthermore, we will be holding a prayer meeting in the Lower Hall next Tuesday evening between 8 - 9pm. You might like to consider fasting on this day to show the Lord that we mean business and that we know that our hope is in Him.

Secondly, we will continue to follow the Government's guidance. This means that:

- we shall continue meeting together for worship until the Government instructs us otherwise.
- we are asking everyone who comes into the church to wash their hands thoroughly or, failing that, use hand sanitiser as soon as they arrive. Additionally, we are regularly washing down the areas which are most commonly touched.
- we are also suggesting that we do not shake hands or hug when we greet one another.
- if you are offered a pastoral visit during this time but would prefer not to have someone come to your home please feel free to say so, we will not be the slightest bit offended. If you do receive a pastoral visitor from PBC into your home, please do insist that we wash our hands as soon as we enter.
- we will have special measures in place for communion during the outbreak, however we will understand should you wish not to take communion. Should the Government decide to advise churches to stop celebrating communion then we will of course comply immediately.

Can we also remind you to follow the government advice to keep washing your hands? Why not recite the Lord's Prayer as you do so? That should ensure that you wash them for the 20 seconds or so needed to make sure all germs are washed off, and wash off some spiritual 'germs' too! The latest Government advice is available at [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) - we suggest you check this frequently to make sure you keep up with their guidance as it develops.

If, in the coming days, you have to self-isolate (or choose to do so) please let us know. We would like to provide prayer and practical support for you and we can't do that if we don't know about your situation. This Sunday morning (15 March) I intend to address the Coronavirus outbreak from a spiritual perspective. I will be preaching a sermon entitled Confident Christians in a time of Crisis from Psalm 23. If you are not able to be in church, then please do listen live at [www.purleybaptist.org/live](http://www.purleybaptist.org/live). As always, you can listen to our recent sermons [www.purleybaptist.org/media](http://www.purleybaptist.org/media).

We will continue to keep you updated on how Coronavirus is impacting PBC. Information is also being posted at [www.purleybaptist.org/news](http://www.purleybaptist.org/news).

Your friend and brother in Christ

James Collins, together with Marilyn Webb and Mike Vamvadelis