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## **PASTOR TO PASTOR: COVID-19 and church leadership**

by Staff, posted Tuesday, March 17, 2020 (one month ago)

NASHVILLE (BP) -- As the coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic progresses, pastors and churches are faced with unique challenges. Those challenges mount daily and can cause pastors and other church leaders to feel overwhelmed and burned out.

In response to this, Baptist Press gathered quotes from online sources and reached out to others within the Southern Baptist Convention to provide encouragement from pastors to pastors. It is our prayer that these words and statements will ease the burden many of our pastors are facing in light of these unprecedented times:

"As pastors, these days can bring anxiety about making the budget, preaching the appropriate message and how to lead a congregation when we can't assemble together. Believe me, I feel it too. But, be reminded you were created and called by God for this moment! God planned to put YOU in the lead for such a time as this. So, pray sincerely, lead clearly and watch God work through you!" -- **Gregg Matte, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Houston, Texas**

"The early church gave themselves continually to caring, sharing, and praying. Don't think of self, but of seniors, shut-ins, and the vulnerable. Who's your one? When people are hearing the hysteria of the news, we need to be sharing the hope of the good news!

"Prayer is the solution because Jesus is the answer! Pray the fear of the unknown turns into the fear of the Lord and the greatest spiritual awakening of our lifetime." -- **Grant Etheridge, Senior Pastor, Liberty Church, Hampton, Va.**

"Every pastor is God's choice servant. What a time to lead like Jesus, to love like Jesus, to encourage like Jesus and to point so many to Jesus. Our gathered church is back in the home again. Be encouraged fellow pastors. We are in this together. The church continues her mission.

"Worship, study, serve, engage! Love God -- love others! The fields are ripe unto harvest! Who's your one?" -- **Don Wilton, Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church, Spartanburg, S.C.**

"Pastor, ministry is a joy and a privilege. There are also times it is a struggle. The key, my brother, is to keep your eye on Jesus, preach faithfully, and pastor selflessly. Do so knowing He will work in, through and in spite of you. Stay faithful, stay focused and lead on." -- **Matt Henslee, Pastor, Mayhill Baptist Church, Mayhill, N.M.**

"The coronavirus is taking pastors into waters we have never navigated, but we know God goes before us. Instead of worrying about what may or may not happen next, God is leading me to trust Him with what's in front of me right now. His wisdom is available as we make tough decisions for our churches day by day.

"This is a great time for pastors to pray together, seek advice from one another, and set an example for our people by believing God for what's next. I'm thankful for pastors in my area who have reached out to encourage me, and I want to do the same for other pastors." -- **Stephen Rummage, Senior Pastor, Quail Springs Baptist Church, Oklahoma City**

"Every crisis in our world is an open door to show God's love. While the current environment around the nation is one of fear, God is in control. Now, more than ever, is an opportunity for the church to outshine the darkness and serve people in pain." -- **Rick Warren, Pastor, Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, Calif.**

"Pastors, the words of Nahum are for us in this time of crisis: 'The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble' (Nahum 1:7). As the world panics, it should hear us pray. As the world shakes, it should watch us shine. As the world worries, it should see us mount up with wings like eagles. As the world trembles, it should know our testimony -- Jesus is Lord." -- **Mac Brunson, Senior Pastor, Valleydale Church, Birmingham, Ala.**

"Dear fellow pastor, I witnessed God working when the coronavirus epidemic caused the cancellation of an annual three-church spring retreat. A young seeker from Wuhan, who didn't have time to attend the retreat, could now hear the Gospel messages by livestream.



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"At first, she was upset the world blamed her city for the pandemic. But after she made a decision for Christ, we all realized God somehow used the virus to lead her to eternal life." -- **David Um, Senior Pastor, Antioch Baptist Church, Cambridge, Mass.**

"Be encouraged in the Lord, as we lead and seek to calm the fears the saints of God and our nation, in light of the coronavirus global pandemic! Our God is the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all of our troubles! So when the Great Comforter comforts you, as a comfortee you can take that same comfort and comfort another comfortee, 'cause you've been comforted by the Great Comforter!

"My fellow pastor-preacher-prophet, let's pursue unhurried, uninterrupted time crying out to the Almighty! He will heal, as we hasten to huddle, hear and instantaneously and radically heed the principles and precepts of the HOLY!

Beloved, trust the Lord, for He already has pre-vision for our provision! Fast and pray, for we are in a battle of spiritual warfare! Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might! For we know that we already have the VICTORY! AMEN!" -- **K. Marshall Williams, Sr., Nazarene Baptist Church, Philadelphia**

"Church hasn't been cancelled. We can't 'cancel' church. The church is the living body of Christ, and Christ hasn't promised we would just survive. His resurrection guarantees His church will be victorious in it all. God is using these moments to hone us ever more intensely toward our kingdom purposes and mission.

"Love your neighbor. Take care of your flock. Preach the word. This is all that matters now. It's all that has ever mattered. Moments like this give us great clarity and focus. God is up to something, even in this. Don't miss what He wants to do in your life and your church." -- **Mike Glenn, Senior Pastor, Brentwood Baptist Church, Brentwood, Tenn.**

"Fellow pastor, remember, God always does his greatest work in our most difficult moments. This crisis is no different. You have been put in your post of leadership for such a time as this. The world is looking to people of faith to speak a word of hope into their lives, and you have the message of deepest hope. Now is the time to share it with unequaled boldness!" -- **Jason Paredes, Lead Pastor, Fielder Church, Arlington, Texas**