



April 2, 2020

Comfort, Worship, and Partnership in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more serious ones such as SARS or MERS. Some months ago, few had ever heard of coronaviruses, much less thought that one particularly virulent variety would upend institutions and societies. Yet, that is what is happening in the wake of the COVID-19 novel coronavirus.

We have already seen COVID-19 affecting Seventh-day Adventist churches, institutions, and events as well. Churches in particularly hard-hit areas have halted their services and other church events. Some Adventist organizations are following the lead of other religious and secular entities and encouraging employees to work from home.

This is an opportunity to enrich ourselves in multiple ways, enjoying quality time to renew our spiritual lives through the study of the Scriptures, prayer, and sharing with others electronically His love and concern for us as His precious children.

The outcome of this pandemic will be different for each one of us. While some will not be contaminated, others will fall sick, some may lose their jobs and incomes, and some will painfully lose a loved one or one's own life. Nevertheless, as God's remnant people, we have the firm assurance that the One who parted the Red Sea, sent manna from heaven, and made water to flow out of the rock is by our sides. His love is unfailing. Our appropriate response to this love should be to daily consecrate ourselves and everything we have to Him.

Even though churches have been closed because of COVID-19 and members are now unable to attend services for an undetermined, extended period, have we retired our worship and partnership with God? Fortunately, the answer is no. Small group, family, and even individual services, and participation in e-services, according to government guidance, have become temporary options to regular church worship services. We also can still worship God with our tithes and Promise (regular and systematic offerings) whenever He blesses us with an income.

It's helpful to consider that the first recorded instance of tithing (see Gen. 14:20) was not part of a religious ceremony or service at all, and that Paul set aside the first day of the week (see 1 Cor. 16:2) as the time for giving to the Lord's work. As we appreciate His presence and blessings during this trying season, it's not the time to halt worshiping and partnering with the Owner and Provider of everything. There are still appropriate ways and means to worship Him with our resources.



[Alternative channels](#) of giving vary from place to place, depending on such factors as access to financial institutions and familiarity with and access to technology. Some believers will have no issue with using a mobile giving app (such as AdventistGiving, eGiving, and 7me apps used respectively in the North American, South Pacific, and South American divisions). In other places, members will be familiar with direct transfers between bank accounts. Or they can mail their check to the church. The important thing is that we understand giving as a response to God's giving, every time He gives, and not as a reaction to appeals, to a particular need, or even as a specific event requiring our presence at a particular time and place. It's also appropriate to remind ourselves that it's the local field that the Adventist Church considers as the storehouse, and the local churches are its outposts.

As we abide in Him and follow His instructions, may these words bring comfort to us: "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4, NIV).