

were about one third those in Pittsburgh, which was much slower to close its schools. Thousands of lives were saved.

We may grumble about or resist changing our habits, especially if it's unclear what's in it for us. But we need to remember that many of these actions are more about protecting others. Perhaps the invitation amidst this crisis is to embrace the inconveniences fully, and then move *beyond* them to seek out the best ways to serve those who are most in need.

Loving Our Neighbor

Community is essential to us as Christians. We are the Body of Christ, and we know that when two or more gather in Jesus' name, he is present with us. So it may be a bit harder for us to handle the "social distancing" happening in many communities.

Our call to community is not only in the context of our church but also in our neighborhood community. How do we literally love our neighbor? How can we be witnesses on our streets?

One way is to regularly check in on your neighbors who may be vulnerable and isolated. Offer to deliver groceries or other items for them or to run other errands so they won't have to risk infection by leaving their home.

Be a positive, calming influence in any online neighborhood communities. Don't spread rumors or hysteria, but find ways to support each other through the crisis.

Living the Virtues

Ultimately, as with life in general, we are called to live out the four cardinal virtues:

- **Prudence** - Carefully discern the best course of action, not just for ourselves, but for the good of all. Ask: What action does God want me to take?
- **Justice** - Seek fairness for everyone, especially those who need it most. Ask: Who is not getting the help that they need?
- **Temperance** - Find a healthy balance between self care and care for others. Ask: Do I err toward selfishness or an unhealthy co-dependence?
- **Fortitude** - Persevere in times of trial and difficulty. Ask: Do I have the courage to do the right thing even when the going gets tough?

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What You Can Do

- **Stop the spread.** Even if you are not particularly concerned about the risk to yourself or your own family, these tactics will protect *others* who may be more vulnerable. Many of us will carry the virus before having any symptoms (and may never develop any).
 - **Wash your hands well** for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. Sing the refrain to Michael Joncas' song "On Eagle's Wings" ("And he will raise you up...") while you wash.
 - **Avoid touching your face.**
 - **Cough or sneeze into your elbow** or a tissue.
 - **Follow the guidance of local officials.**
 - **Stay home if you become ill.**
- **Don't take what you don't need.** Hoarding worsens the situation, and can lead to more infections and more impacts for the most vulnerable.
 - **Leave the masks to others.** Masks only make sense for health care workers and those who are infected. They are not guaranteed to prevent transmission anyway.
 - **Do not overbuy supplies.** Retailers are being wiped out of disinfectants and other supplies, leaving some who most need them without. Be prepared, but be thoughtful and reasonable.
- **Advocate for the vulnerable and targeted.**
 - **Have compassion for those most at risk.** Stand up for those who need the most help and make sure they are being cared for, without judgment.
 - **Fight racism.** Discrimination against those with Asian background only hurts the situation.
- **Proactively love your neighbor!**
 - **Check in on isolated or vulnerable neighbors** and offer to help with specific tasks such as shopping, child or pet care, cleaning, etc.
 - **If you are in a position of power,** use that power for the good of all. Allow workers to work from home or take time off, limit large gatherings, follow government guidance, etc.
 - **Thank those on the front lines** who are protecting us, such as health care workers, police, firefighters. Be gentle and kind with them.
 - **Pray for all those affected by the crisis.**