

## **Coronavirus and the Black Church**

According to the CDC (Center For Disease Control), the Coronavirus is an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that was first detected in China and which has now been detected in almost 70 locations internationally, including the United States.

This disease poses an immediate threat to every community and can have a devastating effect upon everyone's future. With the potential outcome of increased deaths, the community is affected by its threat, and will adjust itself appropriately. But how will this adjustment impact the Black Church? How will this community of believers survive the bombardment of information directing people to stay away from crowds?

Coronavirus has the potential of severely injuring the Black Church as it seeks to fulfill its calling in Christ Jesus within our community. For any threat of harm always poses as a potential barrier restricting actions, but the potential of respiratory disease sounds an alarm that many Black Churches may find difficult to respond to. The average church's ability to do any kind of ministry depends upon a consistent presence of supporters, but if the supporters' fears restrict their physical attendance; then how will the Black Church survive?

The reality that every business, household, and place of worship must face is that their continued existence is dependent upon a sustained support of income to operate. The unfortunate reality is

that many houses of Worship, specifically in the Black Church, have no reserve funds that would allow them to economically survive several months, or weeks without gathering together. Is there an answer or preparation that can be taken by pastors to sustain their congregation? Yes!

You can begin by empowering your people with clear information that removes the barriers that could block their commitment to worshipping God with your church.

Inform the congregation with CDC definitions of the disease and the recommendations that can help to keep them safe. Make your place of worship a model of what each home should practice in order to keep them safe and healthy.

Make available options where your membership can worship with you by video conference, conference calls, Facebook Live, and/or YouTube.

Create and consider different ways by which your congregation can ensure contact with one another if public gatherings are restricted. Provide opportunities for electronic giving: including

- credit card,
- Zelle,
- through your website,
- or Givelify.
- You can also continue to give by check,
- or drop cash at your local location.

Establish a response system that ensures the fellowship is not cut off if public worship is not permitted: i.e. email, live chats, social media, mail, calls, and texting. In a time of crisis, the congregation needs to know that someone cares for them.

The Black Church has always found a way to rise above and beyond the threat wanting to silence its voice and stop its impact in the community. Prepare your congregation for the future of new challenges to their faith.