

Where two or three gather...

March 19 2020 – The coronavirus is spreading and we are all learning what is meant by “social distancing”. For a while we will stop gathering together in church. But we can still gather!

In Matthew 18:20 we have Jesus’ words:

For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them. (NIV)

For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them (NLT)

This is wonderful! The promise of Jesus’ presence with us.

Gathering with a purpose (being intentional)

This is gathering with a purpose. Without “His name” we lack purpose, we lack meaning and we lack authority.

This is agreeing about why we are meeting. We can be together because we are forced to by the need for social distancing, or we can decide that we are a small community gathering around Jesus. A Christ-centred community.

If we make this decision, it will lead to other decisions about how to remain centred on Jesus. This will involve prayer and worship and these things will ground us in Jesus. We sometimes say this as “practising the presence of Jesus” – we do things to help us focus on His presence.

Experiencing the presence of Christ (it’s spiritual)

If we are deciding to gather in Jesus’ name, then He promises to be present with us. Our gathering will become a spiritual place.

This is wonderful. We will become a Christ-centred community and will daily experience His presence with us.

We said gathering in Jesus’ name is “practising His presence”. Well Jesus says “I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you” (John 14:18). This is Him practising His presence with us too. Amazing.

We will become a spiritual place and Jesus will become more deeply involved in our lives, surprising us with His presence.

What next?

Today you can decide with your household to gather in Jesus name each day – and then you will become a spiritual community, experiencing the presence of Jesus. You can choose to turn this time of social distancing into a time of coming closer to Jesus – becoming a Christ-centred community.

How? This will be a journey, it will be a time of exploration. Think about the rhythm of your day and how you could gather together to focus on Jesus. Over the coming weeks as we “draw near to God” we will find that He will draw near to us (James 4:8). We will develop new rhythms in our households and as we deliberately gather in Jesus name, we will find He is right there with us.

24-7 Prayer have some great resources to help us. See prayercourse.org/toolshed/. Perhaps start with how to pray the Lords prayer. And the examen is a lovely way to end each day.

We also have links to lots helpful resources at sohop.org/pray

Living alone

If you are living on your own or know people who are living on their own, please think about choosing to have a daily virtual gathering. You can gather in Jesus name each day via telephone or social media?

Thanks to Andy Freeman in the book Punk Monk for this great insight into Matthew 18:20