

WHAT TO DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

Everything is changing. The ways we live and learn, work and play are all up in the air, and no one knows how things will land. Between the lockdowns, restrictions on gatherings, ongoing riots and protests in our cities, rising crime and racial tensions, it feels like we are lost in the wilderness without a guide. No one knows anything!

Scott Adams (creator of *Dilbert*) sums it up well in one tweet:

Two things we all know for sure in 2020: 1. The ONLY sensible way to make decisions is by looking at the data and listening to the experts. and... 2. All the data is [garbage] and the experts are liars.

So, what is the Church to do? More specifically, what is a local church to do now that we are no longer allowed to do what we've always done?

Though we may have never experienced such change and uncertainty before, our forefathers in the faith were well acquainted with turmoil, particularly in the book of Acts.

WAITING IN JERUSALEM (Acts 1)

Before Jesus ascended to Heaven, He commanded the first disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit when they would receive the power to become His witnesses. (Acts 1:4-8) They had no idea what was coming or when it would happen. So, what did they do when they didn't know what to do?

All these ^f with one accord ^g were **devoting themselves to prayer**, together with ^h the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and ⁱ his brothers. (Acts 1:14)

WORSHIPPING IN ANTIOCH (Acts 13)

Several years later, the thriving church in Jerusalem was devastated and scattered. Believers could no longer meet in the Temple and were under constant threat. The disciples could no longer identify as a Jewish Sect ("Followers of the Way"). The Church now included Gentiles, and their headquarters had shifted to the Syrian city of Antioch. Everything had changed and a new era had begun. Believers were first called "Christians" at Antioch (Acts 11:26), and the leading apostle of the church was now Paul, a former enemy. There were also growing racial tensions rising between Jews and Gentiles. So, what did they do when they didn't know what to do?

Now there were in the church at Antioch ⁿ prophets and ⁿ teachers... While they were **worshipping the Lord and fasting**, ^q the Holy Spirit said, ^r "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul ^s for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then after **fasting and** ^t **praying** they laid their hands on them and ^u sent them off. (Acts 13:1-3)

What did the first disciples do when they didn't know what to do? They got together for prayer and worship...That's it. And they did nothing else until the Holy Spirit revealed His will to them and empowered them for the specific work that they were to do.

Let's follow their lead. We don't need data and experts to lead us through this wilderness. We need the Word and the Spirit. For that reason, I think August is a fine month to gather together and devote ourselves to prayer (and maybe fasting too) until the Lord Himself shows us what to do. In fact, MSBC will be devoting the last week of August for some kind of daily prayer gatherings (August 23-30). We're not sure exactly what this will look like, but we will keep you posted in the next few weeks.