Covid-19 Update - June 26, 2020

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On behalf of the National Team, we remain grateful for the wise leadership and thoughtful approach our churches are taking around the matters of regathering. Consistent with our guidance and coaching throughout these past months, we recognize that the impact of the pandemic differs across our country. For this reason, we continue to encourage prayerful and discerning congregation by congregation decisions in regards to when and how -in-person gathering should resume. These decisions should take into-account local and provincial health guidelines, the specific congregational context and represent a unified congregational leadership approach between board, pastors, staff and volunteers – always taking into full consideration the impact of our decisions on those who are vulnerable.

As we have talked as a team the following themes are surfacing:

1. Regather with grace. Clearly communicate to your congregation not only the guidelines but also that a person’s faith or commitment or loyalty to their congregation will not be judged by their chosen presence or absence at your worship service. We are a discipling movement not a Sunday only gathering movement. Each individual and family has a number of factors to evaluate personally. We simply to choose to love our church family, our neighbours despite differing opinions on re-opening. We extend grace.
2. Proverbs 19:2 says enthusiasm without knowledge is no good; haste makes mistakes. It has been noted that careful details matter because lives matter. Devising and executing a workable plan that everyone knows in advance has proven wise. In other words, don’t regather until you are ready – heard of one church where the board and the pastoral team agreed that both had veto power if either were not ready. A phased approach seems to be the best path forward.
3. Reach out to fellow pastors and congregations and share your learnings, insights and creativity. Let’s learn from each other.
4. Continue to minister to the needs in your community as well as your congregation.

Many of us have connected in new way with friends and neighbours – this has an opportunity for us – let’s acknowledge mission is everywhere.

1. We acknowledge and observe that our pastors are weary – feeling stress, pressure, the weight on both virtual and now in person gathering and all the risks involved. Many have not had much of a break since March because they have so willingly and creatively shifted online. I just want to thank our pastors and encourage you to prioritize times of refreshing and replenishing.