

Reflection for

Covid-19

Exercise: This reflection for pastors and church leaders to do individually or as a group of leaders. At various points throughout this reflection, we invite you to pause to consider how you are feeling and to be still before God (sit in silence). The questions are intended to spark your thinking.

Purpose: The purpose is of this reflection to become more self-aware of how the changes in our culture are impacting us and to prayerfully consider how God is calling us to respond to this crisis.

Through the CBOQ's conversations with pastors, we have noticed the pressure: to be productive as we were before, to compare with other churches, to be the do-it-all pastor and meet all pastoral care needs, to be tech expert overnight or fill in the blank.

Our Encouragement to you

Matt. 22:37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

The greatest commandment has three commandments within the two. God is calling us to love Him above all else and to love others. We often however miss the third commandment within; we must not forget to love ourselves.

Jesus tells us here that loving ourselves is equally important as loving our neighbors. Loving ourselves practically means giving ourselves permission to take care of ourselves, pay attention to our soul (relationship with God), rest physically, enjoy our family and friends) and to feel what you are feeling. At this time, let us lean into what God is calling us to do and accept our limits.

Through taking care of yourself, you will better be able to take care of others. We encourage you to make this your priority.

Reflection

Begin with 3-5 minutes of silence

What changes have you experienced individually?
How are you feeling about these changes?
What changes has your community experienced?
How are you feeling about these changes in your community?
How would you counsel SOMEONE ELSE who was going through these changes individually and communally? What would you tell them? (grace, truth, patience, challenge, rebuke, anger, sadness, compassion, empathy?)
What feelings do you need to give yourself permission to feel? (fear, anxiety, stress, happiness, sadness, insecurity, etc.)
What have you struggled to accept about this new reality?

What has God been doing in your life?
What has God been doing in your community?

Pour your heart to God in prayer. As the Apostle Peter wrote,
“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”
(1 Peter 5:7)

What are the current needs before you?

Yourself (Emotional, Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Health)
Your Immediate Community (family and friends)
Your Work
Pastoral Care (list people/situations -- health, financial, loneliness)
Worship/Technology (Online services, etc.)

How is God calling you to respond? What is God calling you to leave alone, accept, or tolerate?

How is God calling you to meet some of these needs?
Through the Body
Through Other leaders (Who do you need to empower? Invite to Help?)
Through your Own Effort

Consider what Jesus said about the problem of the Pharisees, “Leave them; they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”
Matt. 15:14

What are the unique gifts of this season?

For your Soul (relationship with God)
For your Physical Rest
For your Immediate Community (Family and Friends)
For your Church Community

End with 3-5 minutes of silence

Recommended Reads

Ruth Haley Barton. Strengthening the Soul of your Leadership. (Downers Grove: IVP Press, 2nd. Edition).

Kirk Byron Jones. Rest in the Storm: Self-Care Strategies for Caregivers. (King of Prussia: Judson Press, 2001).

Ruth Haley Barton's Response to the Co-Vid 19

<https://transformingcenter.org/2020/03/that-the-works-of-god-might-be-revealed/>