



28 May 2020

Midweek Encouragement

Abba Father

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (Romans 8:15, NASB)

"Abba, Father..." is an endearing term of addressing God, almost synonymous to calling Him "Papa, God". For the Jews who revere God, using such an address is unthinkable. However, it was used once by Jesus in Mark 14:36, and twice by the apostle Paul in Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6. Make no mistake about it, Abba Father is also the Lord God Almighty! So, for Him to eradicate this COVID-19 pandemic is easy but perhaps only after we have internalised spiritual truths and practices that will equip us to know Him more clearly, love Him more dearly and follow Him more nearly. So, by His grace and God being our Helper...

1. We will examine Scripture more, not any lesser

Many are keenly aware that the post-pandemic church will have to adjust to the so-called new normal where gathering large congregants in a physical church setting is strongly discouraged. It is more likely that spiritual formation will take place within families or for limited small group members across households. Small group leaders as well as the members will need to assume greater responsibilities for their own growth spiritual growth, for evangelism and for discipleship by digging deeply into Scripture, much akin to the church in Berea (Acts 17: 10 – 12). Remember, though, that the goal of such study is life transformation in the Word and in community.

2. We will worship Him more, not any lesser

Despite an initial surge in online church attendance during the earlier months of COVID-19, the Barna Group new poll showed that, by mid-May 2020, 48% of churchgoers said that they had not watched any church online in the last four weeks (<https://careynieuwhof.com/why-are-your-online-attendance-numbers-suddenly-dropping-5-reasons/>). This US statistics is not surprising as the novelty of participating in online church wears off. I am not sure if this is the same frightening trend locally although I suspect that it might be. For various reasons such as lack of space, structure, schedule and/or stillness of heart, some have told me that they find it hard to worship at home. They long to worship in the church sanctuary. Notwithstanding that, worship is simply ascribing worth and praise to our Abba Father from our inner most being and that can happen anywhere, anytime, and under any circumstance (see Psalms 103 and 34). I pray for a re-emergence of individual as well as family worship.

3. We will pray more, not any lesser

Lastly, let's remind ourselves to pray unceasingly (1 Thessalonians 5: 17). Much can be accomplished in and after praying. The privilege of praying, of listening to Abba Father to align ourselves to His will, should be our first response (not as a last resort) and never perfunctory. In short, we pray that we will love God forever more as He is indeed our Abba Father!

In Christ,

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