



TEASA on COVID-19

20 March 2020

The first confirmed South African case of COVID-19, also commonly known as the Coronavirus was reported on Thursday, 5 March 2020. On Sunday, 15 March 2020, President Ramaphosa declared a national state of disaster in terms of the Disaster Management Act in the country's attempt at curbing and preventing the spread of this virus.

Traditionally, churches have played a crucial role in building a sense of belonging through lasting, caring, and trusting social relationships. They will no doubt continue to do so, and serve as agents of hope, faith and compassion for all people. The arrival of the Covid-19 as a global threat presents challenges to how churches will continue to play this vital role. Like the rest of the communities they serve, they find themselves caught up in the war against infection and the spread of the Corona virus.

As TEASA we invite all members to join the war effort against the pandemic. The President has, correctly, proclaimed a State of Disaster in the Republic and announced some measures that must be upheld by all South Africans. TEASA applauds the President for the leadership shown. We commend it to all our members and encourage them to be champions of good practice in the fight against Covid-9. We offer the following guideline for churches

Worship during the Covid-19 pandemic

1. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made to God." Phil 4:6-7
2. **Hygiene:** Make sanitizer available at church entrance/s for the^[1]disinfection of hands. Where this is not available, churches could make running water with soap available for all congregants.
3. **Gatherings:** As gatherings of more than 100 people are prohibited, explore the use of technology, as well as doing multiple services of 100 people or less.
 - 3.1 Church conferences, festivals, youth camps, and other church related gatherings, including ^[1]annual Easter pilgrimage must be suspended.
 - 3.2 Special events such as weddings, try to postpone them, but if you cannot, limit the participants to families or other small groups.

- 3.3 While funerals may still take place, suspend night vigils before funerals. Encourage families to do their best to limit numbers as per the Government's advice. Provide ways for people to sanitize.
4. **Home fellowships:** Devolve the life, worship and witness of the Christian community from large public services to the home.
5. **Sacraments**
- 5.1 **Baptisms:** Immersions in water should be suspended.
- 5.2 **Holy Communion**
- 5.2.1 Care should be taken to avoid touching and sharing cups during Communion. The Communion wafers should preferably be placed on the hand instead of in the mouth, trying to avoid touch as much as possible.
- 5.2.2 The use of individual cups is recommended, which should be taken by the communicants without ^[L]_[SEP]the need of the pastor or the servers to handle the cup. Servers are encouraged to practice good hygiene.
- 5.3 **The laying on of hands:** This normal way of doing ministry should be suspended. Hands could be held close to the person receiving ministry.
- 5.4 **Foot washing:** There should be no foot-washing.
6. **Ventilation:** Ensure proper ventilation in church buildings. Clean and disinfect frequently used and touched objects and surfaces such as pews, microphones using regular household cleaning materials.
7. **Signs of infection:** If signs of contracting the virus appear, self-isolate and immediately seek medical attention.
8. **Basic protective measures against contracting and spreading COVID-19**
- 8.1 Stay at home if sick, to protect yourself and others.
- 8.2 Where possible stay at home and avoid non-essential travel and large groups. Avoid non-essential physical contact and practice social distancing principles.
- 8.3 Avoid touching your face – especially the eyes, nose and mouth.
- 8.4 Cover your cough or sneeze using your elbow or tissue and immediately throw it in a closed off bin.
- 8.5 Practice good hygiene and wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds.
- 8.6 Suspend physical touching contact, refrain from shaking hands and hugging, instead use other non-touching forms of greeting.
- 8.7 Clean and sanitize personal items such as cellphones, pens etc.

Important contacts:

Official Toll Free Call Centre: 0800 029 999

Clinicians Hotline: 082 883 9920

Official WhatsApp Help Service: Say Hi to 0600 123 456

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