

March 29, 2020

Dear CC Philly Family,

Greetings from the Middle East! I hope this message finds you all well. Praying for you, as I know this COVID-19 crisis has affected all of us, our families, and many across the globe in different ways. One thing I'm sure of, is that God is lovingly, patiently, graciously, sovereignly, and faithfully working in the midst of it all – in hearts, lives, families, communities, and nations – to draw many to Himself for His glory.

I just wanted to write to share a bit about what things are like here amidst the COVID-19 crisis.

A Brief History of the COVID-19 Situation in Jordan (on the Horizontal): At the beginning of March, we had no confirmed cases of COVID-19, likely due to lack of testing. However, our first confirmed case was announced on March 2nd. Although people then began to stock up on food, masks, gloves, and hand sanitizers, we didn't have any more confirmed cases for 12 days.

On March 14th, the government announced the closure of schools, mosques and churches starting on March 15th the decision was made to shut down the airport and all border crossings on March 18th. 6 new cases were announced that day. People began to rush to the stores again to stock up on supplies and some foreigners left on flights out of Jordan before the 18th. The number of new cases has been announced daily since that time.

On March 17th, all passengers coming to Jordan on flights (over 5,000 people) were quarantined for two weeks. The government also announced that all businesses should close and people should stay in their homes except for extreme cases. Grocery stores, pharmacies, water and gas supply businesses were allowed to remain open.

After only two days of the recommendation to stay home, not enough people were taking the announcement seriously and many were not staying at home. Because of this, on March 20th, the government announced a full curfew with no one allowed outside of their home without a permit. If caught, a person would face up to one year in prison. By the end of the day on March 23rd, a reported number of 1,965 people were arrested.

On March 24th, the government began to enact their delivery plan (to deliver water, bread, medications, cooking gas) to all the homes in Jordan – a huge undertaking! Because this didn't work out as planned, and many people didn't receive bread etc, the government decided to open the curfew from 10am through 6pm to allow for us to leave our homes to walk to the corner store for bread or basic groceries only. It was difficult to find fresh fruits and veggies for a few days, but it seems that there is now more of a supply. Praise God for the opening up of the curfew for part of the day, as it also allows us to obtain supplies and bring supplies to families in need who live within walking distance of us. Yesterday, on March 28th, the full delivery service (from supermarkets for larger grocery items) through contracted businesses, began. As of today, March 29th, there are 246 confirmed cases of COVID-19.

We are uncertain as to how long the curfew will last, how long schools and churches will be closed, and how long the borders and airports will be closed. Some people have told us weeks, others have told us months.

Personal Update:

Amidst every aspect of the strict curfew, staying at home, and uncertainty surrounding pretty much every aspect of life right now, God has been and continues to remind me that He is with me and He's working. I'm so thankful that He never changes. The Lord has brought me to a place of deep gratitude for seemingly simple things that I used to take for granted, for the people in my life, for His Presence with me always, and yes, even for the COVID-19 crisis and the curfew.

Personally, I sense God doing a deeper work in my heart through all of this. Psalm 46 and Psalm 23 (and pretty much anything I read in scripture these days) are coming to life in a whole new way for me. Amidst the chaos and uncertainty around us, the Lord has been leading me to a place of being still and of knowing Him more, through His Word and in worship and prayer. It's amazing how being still allows you to hear His voice and know His heart more clearly. I sense the Lord gently and lovingly leading me and teaching me how to just "be" with Him and rest in His Love and His Word instead of always running around "doing." I'm so thankful for this opportunity to sit at His feet and to know Him more. From that place of stillness, I'm finding that the Holy Spirit is prompting me to pray and intercede for the people and families He puts on my heart. My two roommates and I have been able to spend time together most days in prayer and worship, too. I'm so encouraged and excited – I believe God is really working and He is and will be exalted in all the nations and in all the earth! He's with us and He is our refuge!

Local Church Family:

Since the curfew began, our church family here has been meeting via Zoom to pray together twice per day (in English in the afternoon and in Arabic with the larger Body in the evening). We've also started studying through Romans together for 30 min every day before prayer. It has been a rich time in the Word and in prayer for each other, for our communities, and for the world. Over the past two Fridays, we have had our usual weekly service live on Facebook, streamed from our pastors' homes. It's been neat to see how God is using it to not only encourage the Body during a difficult time, but also to reach people who normally do not come to church, but who are willing to watch and listen from home. We're all sensing that God is doing a beautiful work in each one of us and in our Body, and we're expectant about how He will answer our prayers in the months and years to come!

Prayer Requests:

- Pray God will redeem the COVID-19 crisis to draw many people to Jesus and bring about a great harvest of souls from our community and from all nations, for His Kingdom and for His glory.
- Pray for eternal fruit to come out of this time of stillness, waiting, prayer, worship and praise. May God strengthen His people, His church, His bride to be firm in our faith and

trust in Jesus. May He give us open doors, favor, and creative ways to love our neighbors and be a light during this time.

- Pray for families and individuals in the community around our church who may not have means to obtain food, medicines, supplies. Please pray God will provide for their every need and allow them to recognize His hand in that provision. Please pray He's preparing their hearts to be good soil too.
- Pray Jesus will comfort, heal and give hope to those who are suffering or afraid during this time.
- Pray for wisdom (medically and spiritually) and grace for me as a health advisor for my company's regional crisis response team. Pray for all health care workers here and abroad.

Thank you so much for praying. Please know that I'm remembering you in my prayers too, and trusting that God is using all of this for our good and for His glory! Let's keep our eyes, hearts and minds on Jesus!

With love in Christ,
Becky