

July 31, 2020

Dear Grace Family,

As we discern how to follow Jesus during these times of uncertainty and ever-changing mandates from the government, we need to remember that God is at work and that His grace is sufficient. Here are the links to the "Governors Executive Order"

https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/WIGOV/2020/07/30/file_attachments/1507337/EMO01-FaceCoverings.pdf and a link to the "Frequently Asked Questions"

https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/WIGOV/2020/07/30/file_attachments/1507334/Face%20Covering%20FAQ.pdf so that you can read it for yourself if you have not yet had the opportunity to do so. The Elders have prayerfully discerned some things for us to consider as we respond Biblically to this latest mandate from the governor.

1. As we read the Gospels, Romans 13, and 1 Peter 2, we are called to obey the governmental authorities God has allowed to be in place over us. So, we need to comply with this mandate regarding face-coverings because the mandate does not prohibit us from obeying Jesus, regardless of whether or not we agree with it. The governments in place during the time of Jesus and the early church were not God-honoring institutions and yet, we are told to honor the governmental authorities. If you do not agree with the mandate, then we want to encourage you to use the rights you have been given to influence your government, contact your representatives, and vote for those who reflect your values during the next election. We may not agree with the decisions of the government but we are called to honor them.

2. There are some exceptions included in the mandate which allow people not to have to wear a face covering. With that in mind, it is up to each of you to determine how you comply with this mandate. It is not our responsibility to enforce or police the wearing of face coverings, but trust your integrity in honoring the governmental authority. So, if you are not wearing a face covering, we trust that it is because you meet one of the exceptions. We are called to extend grace to one another and not shame or judge people for their appearance, whether or not they are wearing a face covering.

We need to pray and stay focused on our message and mission, regardless of what is happening in the culture, including the decisions of the government. The schemes of our enemy include distraction and bringing disunity to relationships, so let us be aware and not allow ourselves to be distracted, but instead pursue unity in the Body of Christ. We need to follow the example of the early church and follow Jesus, regardless of what is going on in the culture.

Praying for you,
The Elders of Grace Church

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We are a family of missionary servants who are making disciples!