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HOW AFRICAN AMERICANS CAN STAY CURRENT AND MANAGE YOURSELF FOR COVID - 19?

The coronavirus pandemic is a rapidly evolving virus that accompanies a time of uncertainty. The fear of the virus is spreading faster than the virus itself. Remember God's spirit doesn't make cowards out of us. The Spirit gives us power, love and self control. Although this pandemic has shaken us to our core, we can adhere to the CDC'S guidelines by exercising self control. If we have been asked to shelter in place, self quarantine, or keep a reasonable distance between ourselves and others then we should abide by those guidelines. The guidelines may change daily but common sense directives remain the same. While this is a time of uncertainty, we should focus on what we know now and what is best for the greater good by helping each other through this critical time.

Coronavirus is a viral infection that has been around for some time. It infects humans and animals, typical coronavirus encompasses the common cold. The novel Coronavirus 2019 designated as COVID19 by the World Health Organization is also known as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2. It originated in a food market in

Wuhan city, the capital of the Hubei province in China. This strain is considered novel because we as humans have never seen this before and it is able to infect everyone. Because we didn't have prior exposure to this unknown virus we were not prepared for it. This particular strain has been found in bats and potentially in pangolins but is now primarily spread through the community by person to person contact. Transmission occurs through respiratory droplets that are ejected when people cough and sneeze. You may breathe in these droplets, or they may reach your nose, eyes, or mouth. Transmission may also occur from touching surfaces and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes. Coronavirus may live on surfaces from hours to 3 days. Symptoms may appear within 2-14 days of exposure and range from asymptomatic, mild upper respiratory symptoms, dry cough, fever, shortness of breath to viral pneumonia with severe shortness of breath, respiratory failure, kidney failure and potentially death. While it is true 80% of the cases are mild and people recover 20% of the cases are serious. These tend to be found in older populations and people with preexisting illnesses like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, Lupus and immunosuppressed states due to drugs or chemotherapy.

The current pandemic is community spread. This is called a pandemic because COVID19 was unable to be contained and spread throughout multiple countries. Large gatherings are avoided at this time to help prevent the spread and help our most vulnerable population. Also, it is important to know people can spread the disease even when no symptoms are showing. Social distancing, by staying home or keeping a distance greater than 6 feet from people, frequent handwashing with soap and water for 20 seconds, disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and objects and respiratory hygiene; covering mouth and nose with bent elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing are all important to minimize spread of this virus. If you get infected or test positive with COVID19 you must self-quarantine within your house for 2 weeks. This will help prevent the spread of the virus to your family. Your family should self-quarantine as well due to exposure. While it appears that children aren't getting as seriously ill as older people, they are still capable of catching coronavirus and spreading the disease unknowingly. Young adults are rapidly becoming infected because they are failing to follow the instructions on social distancing. Many are following posts on social media rather than the CDC and WHO healthcare professionals.

Masks are not beneficial unless you are actively sneezing and coughing. Masks may help minimize spread and lessen chance of infecting others, but spread also seems to be occurring before people show symptoms. Currently we have a mask shortage which create a risk of healthcare workers not adequately protecting themselves as well as the infected patients in their care. The general public does not need to wear masks but please have one available along with your hand sanitizer.

To stay up to date and gain accurate information please look at the World Health Organization, the Centers of Disease Control and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment as accurate resources.

Recommendations:

1. Postpone nonessential travel
2. Avoid contact with sick people
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
4. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds
5. Use hand sanitizer if washing your hands is not possible (60% alcohol)
6. Avoid traveling if you are sick
7. Social Distancing - 6 feet
8. Learn more about the coronavirus
9. Stay off social media related protocols or guidelines
10. Don't listen to your friends about social media myths
11. Prayer