



To Our Antioch Family,

As an Elder Team, we have been wrestling with how to address the most recent mask mandate. The issue at hand is not necessarily masks, but the church's response to scripture, our personal convictions, and walking out being the body in unity.

We want to acknowledge that there is a deeper invitation to understand the Bible as it relates to believers and the government. It is our desire to lead, cover and instruct the local church per the scriptural standard for Elders.

The process we have walked through over the last week begins with submission to Jesus as the Head of the Church, reading God's word with a posture of humble obedience, and seeking wise counsel concerning our response. We also believe it is our call as Elders to lead by invitation and example. We desire to lay no greater burden upon the church than is necessary.

As to Biblical Guidance:

Our interaction with governing authorities

Romans 13:1-7

Titus 3:1

1 Peter 2:13-17

Our role as Elders

Titus 1:9

1 Peter 5:1-4

In light of these scriptures, our approach to the current mandate is that the Elders will wear a mask in accordance with the guidelines set out by Larimer County. We are asking members of Antioch to partner with us in this decision.

In addition, we recognize that wearing masks has become a point of faith and conviction for some, and we desire to honor the journey of each individual regarding personal convictions.

A Word About Convictions:

When we form individual convictions, we need to do so under the fear of the Lord and with sound biblical study and critique. When the Bible speaks of individual convictions (Romans 14), it does so in a specific context. Jewish believers with thousands of years of religious history were struggling with the freedoms of Gentile believers. These were deep seated and

weighty beliefs held for generations. These believers were admonished in Romans 14 not only to walk with a clear conscience before God, but to do so without judging others.

With this said, scripture is clear and repetitive regarding submission and yielding to governing authorities. If your choice is not to follow our lead on this issue, then we implore you to do so only with conviction rooted in the word of God, while also addressing your personal response to Romans 13, Titus 3 and 1 Peter 2.

We also see in scripture that the role of Elders is to guide and teach believers, so we ask that you allow us to do so as you navigate these convictions in the weeks and months to come. Our desire is not only to lead by example in this moment, but to lead all of us toward making the word of God, the Bible, our ultimate authority for godly living.

A Word About Unity

In light of our instruction from Romans 15:5, our appeal to each of you is to allow God to give you patience and encouragement, helping you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ. Our call is to value, support, challenge and love each other in this moment as we walk together in unity. We will press into relationship with one another, not judging each other. We will humbly ask questions, make space for individual convictions, use self control, and choose to submit to one another.

What This Means:

We are asking members of Antioch to partner with us in our decision to wear masks on Sunday mornings.

In adhering to this mandate, we recognize there are reasonable exceptions permitted (i.e. medical exemptions, food & beverage consumption), and we ask that you apply those with honesty and integrity.

We admonish everyone to read the current mandate in its entirety.

As the mandate requires only businesses to post signs and check masks as people enter, Antioch, as a house of worship, will not be doing so.

We are making ourselves available in the coming weeks to open dialogue about how we've reached this decision. One of our Elders will be in the area near our coffee bar Sunday mornings at 8:30am.

The Elder Team