

WE'RE ALL FIRST RESPONDERS

Every day I await a phone call from my husband, Ray. He is a first responder, working as a nursing home administrator. As a mobile director of operations licensed in several states, he was working several miles from home when the COVID-19 pandemic exploded.

We chat daily on the phone, discussing his staff and patients. I can hear the stress in his voice as he tells me of the emotional strain on one husband who cannot visit his wife of 63 years.

Apart for weeks, we rely on our faith and give thanks for blessings.

Watching the front-line workers on media, I realize that as Christians we all are called to be first responders. In prayer, mindfulness, and acts of kindness it is a disciple's responsibility to respond. It is not a choice. How we respond is the choice.

Whether we are "in the trenches" as front-line workers or sheltering in place, we have taken upon us the name of Jesus Christ. We will have a great opportunity during and after the pandemic. How we respond will be our legacy. A lineage of response begins with our choices today. It is recorded in John 13:34-35 NRSV:

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

This is our calling. We are all first responders. Our answer to the pandemic is where faith and action intersect. In a world full of hate and divisiveness, we are anointed to bring inclusion and kindness, providing a mantle of gentleness, empathy, and mutual respect.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

—Philippians 4:4-7 NRSV

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