



In our most recent Bible Study together, I took the team into Hebrews 10. Here are what I dubbed the 'Let us directives' from verses 22 – 25. I hope you find them a useful reminder in the uncertain times we are all still facing.

Let us...

1. Draw near to God with a sincere heart (vs22)
 - a. Full assurance of faith
 - b. Hearts sprinkled **CLEAN**
 - c. Bodies washed with pure water
2. Hold fast the confession of our hope
 - a. Without wavering
 - b. **HE** is faithful
3. Consider how to stimulate one another
 - a. To love and good deeds
4. Not forsake meeting together
 - a. Encourage one another

One of my favourite verses in this chapter is vs 39: "We are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved."

It has been good and insightful for me to take part in the Vision Argyll online discussions that Stewart Shaw and Marilyn Shedden, have put together. This group of people are definitely not shrinking back in the challenge the church is facing! eXp is looking forward with expectation to what the changes that our (churches) experience over the past several months will mean for us all in the near future and beyond. We are excited to see what our part in this will be.

Here is a wee insight into what is happening with eXp!

Voices, voices, everywhere – and these days most of these voices are coming out of our tv screens, our mobile phones, tablets, laptops and computers. There has been very little face to face contact, but things are easing and there are now more opportunities to start meeting up with our young leaders and our young people. As we do so, we continue to look to the guidelines to make sure we are adhering to them.

eXp has been blessed over the years by the close relationship which Paul Beautyman secured within Dunoon Grammar School. This privileged relationship continues as we have been one of the few supporting organisations in the country to be invited back into a school at its re-opening on August 12th to help with the transition of the new S1 pupils initially and then to be additional daily support during the lunch time breaks. At the moment our clubs cannot re-start, but we are in communication with Mr. Mitchell, the Head of the school who is as keen as we are to get these up and running at the first opportunity the guidelines will allow. At the end of the first full week of school, the Head of the school stopped me in the corridor and said "Thank you, eXp has been exemplarily in their presence in the school and so very helpful. It has helped the students and the staff tremendously to have you here."

I have been in touch with primary schools and they are, understandable, only allowing essential staff into the schools. But they are keen to keep communicating and have us back involved at the earliest date possible.

I have been in the office now several times a week since the week commencing 20th of July. This has allowed us to do face to face praying, planning, training, implementing of extra hygiene safety measures in the office as well as a good clean of the office (all socially distanced of course). All this in preparation for when our door can be open to all again. Currently visits to the office are by appointment only and have

concentrated on our community partners, young people in the Rookie leadership training programme and our adult volunteers.

The team continues to enjoy our Bible studies and regular online meetings with our volunteer leaders which consist of games and a Bible Study.

Since our 'Kickstart Summer' event, two new online groups have started at the request of the young people who were involved on the day. So now every other Wednesday we have a girls dgroup (discipleship) consisting of 4 high schoolers and a couple of leaders who are going through the Alpha Youth series. This has been encouraging to all who are involved. There is also a guy's dgroup consisting of 4 high schoolers and a couple of leaders who are having good discussions every other Wednesday, as well. Exciting times! We are also planning to schedule a series of 'Going Deeper' sessions online with talks from several guest speakers on the armour of God and a series of online crafting sessions with eXp. These are open to all young people and we will advise of registration when we are ready to make them available. All those who register for the crafting sessions will receive all the necessary crafting materials they need in order to participate.

In addition, we are now planning to start some small group work. I have meet with Rev. Alan Wright of the Baptist church and have secured space that is already sorted to meet the current guidelines in doings so. I have had contact with Jim Anderson from Kirn/Sandbank church where we are hoping to start an after-school club for P6/7 students when allowed to do so. We are hoping and planning to be able to still hold the Autumn 'Gather' youth weekend retreat at Portban as well as the School of Music retreat. This will depend greatly on the guidelines the Scottish government puts out nearer that time. For the foreseeable future, we will continue to provide some online activities for our young leaders and young people to engage with including our monthly School of Music.

The team continues to develop, and I have been able to secure a couple of online courses related to the health and wellbeing of young people in light of CV19. Most recently I have enquired about a free course through TLG for Emotional 1st Aid training for those working with young people. It is my hope to put the team through this training as well. This is an important part of our role in the lives of the young people we have contact with and we are constantly looking to keep updated and informed on how we can do this with excellence.

As ever, if I or eXp can be of assistance in anyway, please do not hesitate to be in touch.

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