**A Prayer for the Ninth Week of Virtual Church**

O Lord our God, this is the ninth week. In how we measure our lives this is not a long time. Yet is has seemed long for many of us in a culture where we have come to expect immediate gratification of our needs and desires.

We must realize that in how we measure our eternal life with You that even the second hand on a clock has not moved forward. We just do not understand the timeless nature of eternal life. Through worship of You we get a glimpse of the joy that will be present.

We are having trouble delaying our gratification when it comes to seeing and interacting with family and friends. Some of us just need to hug a child, a grandchild, a parent, or a grandparent.

Economic pressures are also difficult to ignore. We empathize with people who have lost their jobs. Some permanently. We experience the economic pressure in our immediate and extended family, and among our friends and neighbors. For some of us it has hit our household. Is it reasonable for us to be angry about government officials who control our ability to get back to work? Or is it wiser for us to listen to the scientists who say, “Not yet!” Our emotions will not give us a rational answer.

Some prognosticators have suggested that during this time it would take us three weeks to break the habits of life – including how we relate to church. They then said it would take us until the ninth week to set new habits in place. It’s the ninth week. We need to ponder the new habits we have set; particularly the ones related to You.

Because of the new habits we have established, how will our relationship with You be different? With our congregation? With our spiritual focus? With our missional engagement in Your world?

Beyond these thoughts, how will our economic life be different? How will we spend money in different ways? What things have we discovered on which we spend money that we will not be spending money anymore? Will we save more money because we had some savings for a rainy day, but not enough savings for a monsoon season?

When we consider the words “life” and “precious”, how will we react differently in our focus and faithfulness to people about whom we care very deeply? How will we act as a global Christian who desires that everyone have a loving life relationship with You that comes out of Your unconditional love for all people? What specific actions will we take to support ministry in our community, and Great Commission efforts in the remotest parts of the world?

People have died during this pandemic without an eternal relationship with You. This is sad. What do we see as our responsibility in the midst of this situation? Give us guidance, O Lord.

In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.