

“Balancing Friends & Health”

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Dear Soul-Searcher,

Over the last two going on three years when Covid-19 was first introduced to the world it took a major toll on everybody. As we were forced to live in a separated and social distanced world affecting not only our educational system as well as our careers, but it also affected our social life especially during quarantine. The concern that I am faced with is very significant because you as well as many others have been asking the same question and that is how to maintain a social circle during the pandemic? While you may be asked to keep a six feet distance from each other, mask up, and limit gathering with your peers you can still find creative ways to balance a social life and a healthy life covid free.

To begin with, you want to approach the situation by first coming together as a group and discussing different ways to plan hangs out, special events such as birthdays and special holidays, as well as finding places that are currently opened and the rules that are expected to follow. From that everybody is on the same page as to what is to be expected, following dates and time that everyone is available for planned events or hang outs. You have now created ways to maintain a social life with your peers; now it's time to talk about how to keep a healthy covid free life.

While there is no harm in maintaining a social life with your peers your health is also important so before coming together. It is necessary to inform your peers if you are experiencing covid-19 symptoms, if you have tested positive, and if a close relative is experiencing symptoms or have tested positive. If so it is important to get tested and God forbid if you do test positive to stay away from your peers and quarantine until your test results prove otherwise. Even though you may not be able to meet up in person you can still participate at home while recovering via zoom or facetime. From that your peers aren't affected as well as others around you and everybody is able to continue with their social life as well as remaining healthy covid free.

Now that you have created and discussed social plans, and health plans it is also essential to keep each other encouraged and strengthened. This pandemic has made a big difference in the world causing some people to feel stress, depression, anxiety, etc. So it is much needed to uplift those around you by simply praying for each other whether it is together or on your own personal time. Creating new memories together, sending encouraging messages to each other such as words or scripture verses, being a supportive and attentive friend, and lastly connecting on a deeper level by telling each other how much they mean to you.

I have been close with my group of friends for almost eight to ten years now and I can honestly say that during this pandemic we have all faced situations concerning relatives, school peers, or

family friends that have been affected by covid. Thank God none of us were affected by it however from that we have all built a deeper connection with each other, our family, and God. So I'm grateful for them because we have learned to up lift eachother up through the good and bad at a greater level following the same advice that I have presented now.

I pray that this piece of advice has not only helped you but encouraged you as well thank you!