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Chapter Presentation

Family Development in a Post Pandemic Era

When the pandemic hit, it changed every aspect of our lives. Suddenly, we found ourselves confined in our houses; we lost the privilege of gathering with our friends, family, churches... We were mandated to have half our faces covered by a mask; we have lost people, everyone knew someone who had lost someone, and we lost friends over different political views and on how to deal with the virus, among so many other losses.

Particularly in my life, the pandemic changed my interaction with people. My classes were all online. Since I was a transfer student at Nyack, I had yet to meet some of my professors. It was weird to walk across the stage on graduation day last year and have none of your professors recognize you.

At my job, I could not get closer to anyone, and I had to sanitize the whole place from time to time so people would feel more "safe." Getting sick with Covid also affected my ability to work for several days, and had long term affect as I felt tired and weak for more than a year.

The pandemic also changed how people looked at me when I coughed or sneezed. It was funny to see that a regular thing in life all of a sudden becomes a trigger in people's life. Although, I cannot judge because I also often had the same reaction, turning suddenly with an alert response when other people coughed or sneezed next to me.

As a congregation It also changed the way we worship the Lord in our church. We lost the "freedom" to gather as a church, and our worship service happened through zoom or a

recorded video on YouTube. When we were allowed to gather again, we were faced with the struggle of having different opinions regarding masks and vaccines.

Many times I felt embarrassed and left out because I was not vaccinated. Some people would see me as "irresponsible" and having no regard for others, as if I was a threat to spread the virus just because I had not taken the vaccine. At least now that the pandemic per se is "over," although the virus is still around, I feel better knowing that even the vaccinated get and spread the virus. However, still, I haven't received any apologies from those who criticized me.

Finally, one of the most impacted areas of my life was my exercise routine, and my travel plans. I was used to getting up every day at five-thirty in the morning to go to the gym and exercise for about one hour and a half, but the gym remained closed for months. I am to this day still blaming covid for the extra pounds I have not been able to lose. In June 2020, my husband and I celebrated our tenth anniversary, and we had planned for a long time to spend two weeks in Hawaii to celebrate. But, unfortunately, we had to cancel because of the traveling ban that was put in place during the pandemic.

The pandemic left consequences not only on people's physical health but especially on mental health. The fact is that the social isolation imposed by the pandemic has produced profound changes in people's daily lives, and the need to adapt to them has resulted in enormous stress. However, not all were losses. Some changes were good; we are more careful and mindful of the germs around us. We value more a Sunday brunch with our loved ones. We are learning to follow the counsel in the Bible, to learn to count our days. In general, the pandemic produced on us more endurance and resilience, among so many other things.

The pandemic reminded us how fragile we are. It made us more aware of things we take for granted, like gathering with our families and friends. The pandemic will certainly, leave a significant mark on the personal history of each one of us as well as on the history of the world. Still, it will also leave positive lessons if it has made everyone aware of how vulnerable we are and how necessary it is to care for our mind, body, and spirit.