

This document seeks to provide questions for personal consideration and discussion, following on from the [Views on vaccination reflection](#). For any medical advice, I recommend that you consult your doctor. The aim of these questions is to encourage thought provoking reflection, as we work towards unity.

These questions were offered by a range of people, and represent several different angles of the discussion. I encourage you to read through both pages, and then take time to sit with questions that stand out to you. Prayerfully respond to issues that may surface. Questions could also be explored with others. Aim to avoid defensiveness or personal attack, and to seek collective wisdom through listening and healthy dialogue.

Personal reflection questions

- What are your biggest concerns when it comes to the issue of COVID-19 vaccinations?
- How is this discussion personally affecting you, your family, your friendships, your job?
- What fears have you experienced recently, and how is God enabling you to overcome these?
- What personal losses are you grieving at this time?
- What parts of Jesus' teaching are shaping the way you approach this decision?
- Who is God asking you to love, care for, forgive, or be patient with?

Views on vaccination

- From the "Views of vaccination" document, which one do you relate to the most?
- What have you learned as you've taken time to listen to others who hold a different view?
- Why do you think Christians can arrive at so many different conclusions?
- Is your vaccination decision primarily based on: scientific medical recommendation, political views, spiritual beliefs, peer pressure, fear, alternative information, or something else.
- How have you determined which information you trust?

General questions

- How important is the freedom to choose what we put into our bodies? Are you happy for the state to make that choice for you?
- How do we uphold personal rights, societal responsibility, and Jesus' call to lay down our lives?

Some cheeky gibes 😊

- Would you be comfortable being with an unvaccinated person? If not, why? Does the vaccine not work?
- Are you following your doctors recommendations? If not, why? Are you more qualified than them?

Mandatory vaccinations from two angles

Questions of concern.

The NZ Bill of Rights Act 1990 describes the "Right to refuse to undergo medical treatment – *everyone has the right to refuse to undergo any medical treatment*" (Section 11 [NZ Bill of Rights](#)).

- The vaccine mandate ([link](#)) for teachers and medical staff seems to breach this legislation. How concerned are you, if the government is breaking this human rights law?
- Do you think that removing unvaccinated people from their jobs, and restricting their access in society is acceptable? How does this NZ Bill of Rights statement affect your answer to this?

Contrasting questions.

Various immunisations (eg TB, measles, mumps, rubella, etc) were already compulsory for health workers in some NZ primary health care settings. Similarly, with international travel, there were already vaccination requirements to enter many countries, meaning that travel was restricted on this basis.

- Given that there were *already* exclusions based on other vaccinations in these situations, how are the COVID-19 vaccine mandate restrictions any different?
- Do you think it is acceptable that the spread of COVID-19 amongst unvaccinated people in many nations, is overwhelming healthcare services, to the extent that other critical care cannot be provided? ([link](#))

Comparing rights and freedoms

Not all rights / freedoms are equivalent. And some freedoms carry helpful restrictions.

To illustrate this: I believe in the freedom of religion, that enables me to believe in Jesus freely. This freedom is fundamental, to the extent that I'd be willing to die for this. I also believe in freedom of expression. However, some aspects of this freedom may receive a lower ranking in importance to me. I want to express myself by playing loud music at 2am. But in respect for society, there are noise control restrictions.

This is an example of a helpful restriction on personal freedom, for the benefit of society.

Let's suppose that the right to freedom of religion received a 10/10 in importance, and the freedom of expression to play music loudly received a 1/10.

- What number would you place on the right to receive medical care when you need it?
What number would you place on the right to refuse a medical treatment?
- What are some other examples of "helpful restriction on personal freedom", for the benefit of society?
How do you know where "my rights end", and where "societies rights begin"?
- In what ways does your vaccination decision affect others? Is this mainly a personal or societal issue?
- In what circumstances would you feel that it is best to lay down your rights for the sake of others?
- Alternatively, in what circumstances would you feel that the government has taken too much control?
What issue would you believe is significant enough to speak out, protest, or even to lose your job?

Some have compared NZ COVID-19 regulations to the Jewish loss of freedom under Nazi control.

- Is it reasonable to compare this situation with Holocaust? How are these comments offensive?
- Is the vaccine mandate *more like*: the Jews losing their freedom to live;
OR New Zealander's losing their freedom to drive without a seatbelt in the 1970's? Why?

Church gatherings

- What are your biggest concerns about church gatherings and the COVID-19 vaccination?
- Would you be afraid to take communion with a person who is unvaccinated? Would you drink from the same cup? Or just each to their own little cup in separate wings of the church before a deep clean?
...and only if the state allowed it?
- Who are the most vulnerable in our church? What is the best way to care for these ones?

One Christian considers that vaccine passports would encourage freedom to worship, because it provides more safety for more people. Another Christian considers that vaccine passports would threaten the freedom to worship.

- Whose freedom holds a higher priority? The individual or the collective group?
- What options for church gatherings could offer respect, care and understanding for all?
(I'd gratefully welcome your suggestions on this if you'd like to email me ☺ : tim@fbc.nz)
- Alongside the vaccine, what other ways could ensure optimum safety for all in future gathering?

Some consider that the vulnerable (eg elderly, unwell, or immune compromised) have no ability to choose their health situation, whereas everyone else has the ability to choose to be vaccinated.

- Is this accurate? And how does this impact the conversation?

Jesus calls us to lay down our lives for each other.

- Does that mean surrendering all of our rights? Or some? Which ones? When?
- What does unity look like in the body of Christ, between the vaccinated and the un-vaccinated?
- Have I felt hated or misunderstood? Who is Jesus calling me to forgive and to love?
- Have I made a group of people my new enemy? Who is Jesus calling me to love at this time? How?
- What are the next steps the Holy Spirit is leading me to take?

*On a personal note, I want to acknowledge the challenges that each person is experiencing. It is a really difficult time for all. I want to express my care for you and openness to value you, regardless of your stance.
Grace and peace.*

Tim Palmer, Franklin Baptist Church, Oct 2021