

Rodney Howard-Browne's Attorney: Will You Choose Liberty or Tyranny?

At 12:45 p.m. today, we received a call stating that Florida Pastor Rodney Howard-Browne of The River Church of Tampa was being arrested for holding church services yesterday. While a long list of commercial operations are exempted from the Tampa administrative order, this religious gathering was targeted. After reviewing the facts, we have agreed to represent the pastor.

Even before the arrest at the pastor's home was complete, Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister held a press conference lecturing about what the Bible says. He called the pastor "reckless," and said he wants to make him an example.

The Tampa order has 42 paragraphs of exceptions, and another paragraph that further exempts any business that can comply with a 6-foot separation. Yet this church did comply. In fact, this church has done more to balance worship with protecting people, including by:

1. Enforcing the 6-foot distance between family groups in the auditorium as well as the overflow rooms.
2. Ensuring all the staff wore gloves.
3. Ensuring every person who entered the church received hand sanitizer.
4. Enforcing the 6-foot distance in the farmer's market and coffee shop in the lobby via specific floor markings (farmer's markets and produce stands are expressly exempted).
5. Spending \$100,000 on a hospital-grade purification system set up throughout the church that provides continuous

infectious microbial reduction that is rated to kill microbes, including those in the coronavirus family.

The rights enumerated in the United States Constitution and Florida law still apply to people of faith.

No other secular business has done what this church has done to protect its people. Yet Hillsborough County and Sheriff Chronister want to openly discriminate against church gatherings.

Will You Choose Liberty or Tyranny?

America is in the fight for her life right now—not against a virus that has so far caused fewer deaths worldwide than car accidents or tuberculosis, but against the anti-Christian, petty tyrants who, unable to steal your freedom in the good times of broad daylight, now seek to use panic and fear to force you into compliance. And when you don't comply, they will turn every governmental mechanism against you even as they raise public outcry to condemn you. This is how liberty is lost.

How Pastor Howard-Browne was treated and vilified by the sheriff is unbelievable. This does not look like America. This church has done what no business has done to protect people, but these government tyrants want to crush religious gatherings no matter what.

The cost of losing freedom is worth the fight. That is why we provide all our services at no cost.

We will not stand by idly as anti-Christians and petty local tyrants try to suffocate and silence the church.

We will not stand by idly as Republicans and Democrats alike shred the United States Constitution.

My only question now is: Will you stand with us?

Every governor, every congressman and every member of the administration needs to hear from you now: Tell them we will not abandon the Constitution for anything, least of all fear.
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Mat Staver *is founder and president of Liberty Counsel.*