

Romans 1:11

¹¹ For I long to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift, to strengthen *and* establish you;

[Amplified Bible \(AMP\)](#)

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I have always enjoyed the many books by David McCullough. He is an excellent writer for someone, who loves to read about history. His book on John Adams is one of the best I have ever read. I recently read, [THE PIONEERS: The Heroic Story of the Settlers Who Brought the American Ideal West](#), published by Simon & Schuster. I really thought I was going to be reading about the west as we think about it in movies and television. It was actually about pioneers moving into what is now Ohio.

The time of the migration was a long and dangerous journey from the known into the unknown. People perished from drought, flood, disease and altercations with Native Americans. Some made return journeys to the east, but most never saw their family or friends in the east again. Postal service was non-existent for many years.

We are in a new world in the midst of COVID-19. Social distancing and isolation are our new norm. I never would have believed that Belk would close its doors for a season or public schools would be shuttered for an extended period. And what about our churches? No gatherings for weeks. I can begin to relate to Paul's desire to see the people of the church in Rome face to face. But he did do the next best thing.

We have an advantage over the western pioneers and Paul. We can mail cards and letters to family and friends. We can even speak with them by phone. We also can talk and see them almost face to face with a variety of electronic helps.

I encourage you to use our longing for contact to become action. Send notes of encouragement. Call someone and chat. Join in worship electronically. Use the tools we have to share spiritual gifts and encouragement. Strengthen one another in this time of anxiety.