

# Just Ask COVID conundrum

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Help! I live in a flat of four and two of my flatmates don't seem to care about COVID rules. They have been out at least two nights this week and I'm pretty sure they are mixing more widely than they're meant to. They are also planning a flat party for the weekend – I don't know what to do!

**F**or many reasons, COVID-19 strains many of our closest relationships, drawing out hidden attitudes of judgmentalism and irritation.

The first thing to be aware of is your own heart, looking out for any unloving or hypocritical attitudes. There is also great merit in doing what one can to live at peace with people...

*'If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.'* (Romans 12:18)

However, the rules exist for a reason, and there may be a role for frank conversation, either with your two flatmates or with all the residents.

Remove the plank from your own eye first. It's a truism that it's easier to see fault in others if that fault first exists in oneself. Have you really kept all the rules perfectly? What about that time when....?

Try discussing with your flatmates what makes you most anxious in this situation. This may be fear for your own safety, or concern for the broader picture and numbers of cases, or concern for vulnerable family members and your ability to go home for visits. Or it might be helpful simply to point out the latest government regulations.

Remember, your flatmates may not be aware of all the rules. Not everyone has managed to keep up with all the changes. It could be helpful to review with your housemates what the latest rules are – you may all be surprised! It could also be helpful to look at some of the fines that can be imposed on those who break the rules....

As with many similar situations, your approach will be affected by whether your flatmates are Christians. When dealing with fellow believers, we have a greater responsibility to lovingly bring correction. With our friends who are not yet Christians, we are seeking to demonstrate the love of Jesus and to model what it looks like to follow him.

Think of fun or fulfilling activities that you could do as flatmates while staying within the rules. There may be a great desire to join with other groups – consider setting up a video link with another flat, or watching a movie together while logged into Teams or Zoom, or investing some time in organising a quiz night. If you can socialise as flatmates, make the most of this. Could you organise a work-out or baking week or a fun run? Look out for Student Union-run events, and consider getting behind these as a Christian Union – a great opportunity to raise the profile of your group, and show love to the organisers who may have put much time into something which could flop if insufficient numbers join.

*'Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.'* (1 Peter 4:8) ■

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