



Doing Church and
Social Distancing

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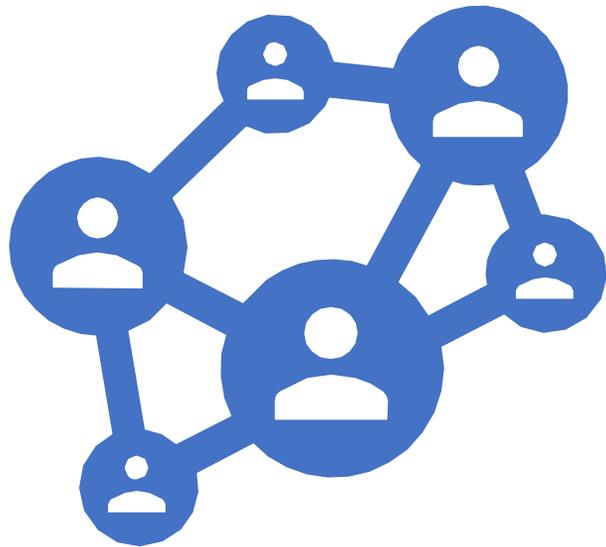
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It's Not Either/Or - It's Both/And



- Even before 2020, it was always important to find the balance between large group and small group, between physical presence and digital presence.
- All of us, people and churches, struggle to make changes. But we have to adapt as we find the best ways to connect with people and do ministry.

Large Group Gatherings

There are options to consider. Be creative!

1. Everyone comes but we spread out where we sit in our auditorium. 10 ft apart? It isn't the best option.
2. Everyone comes but some sit in the auditorium, some in the fellowship hall. Spread out to different parts of the church and watch on a screen.
3. Split into more than one time. Some come at 9:00, some come at 11:00 and some at 1:00.
4. Drive in church. Stay in your car in the parking lot.

Large Group Gatherings

There are options to consider. Be creative!

1. Going live on Facebook or some other venue. You don't have to be at church to preach. You can stream from your home, your office, a different room or outdoors.
2. Record the message/music beforehand and then stream it later. You don't have to record music every week. You can record three sets of songs and post them in future weeks when needed. You don't need a praise team, you can have one person on piano or guitar. You can also use music videos.

Large Group Gatherings

There are options to consider. Be creative!

1. You don't have to have music. Just preaching is fine.
2. You don't have to do preaching in the traditional way. You could blend in a video clip, interviews, discussions and testimonies from church members or others.

Large Group Gatherings

Things to remember when you make a preaching video.

1. Good light in front of you. Not much light behind you.
2. Make sure the camera is at eye level.
3. Make sure the camera is close enough to get a waist up shot of you speaking. It doesn't need to be a full-body shot of head to toe. That can be distracting. Waist up.
4. Be aware of background noise.

Large Group Gatherings

Things to remember when you make a preaching video.

1. Keep it short. Most people suggest 25 minutes or less.
2. Keep it personal. Visualize and keep in mind a mental picture of the people you are speaking to.
3. If you are going to be reaching more people online than you usually do in person, what do you want to say to the new people who are watching. Are there ways they can be involved? Are there things they need to know? Is there a way they can fill out an info card? Make a decision public?

Large Group Gatherings

Things to remember when you make a preaching video.

What are some ways you can help listeners be involved and respond to the message?

- Do you want them to pray about something?
- Do you want them to pause the video and read something?
- Do you want them to do something?
- Do you want them to discuss? At the end, how about asking every family to list 5 ways they can apply today's message?

Large Group Gatherings

Things to remember when you make a preaching video.

When people come to watch, is there anything else you want them to know or do?

- Are there some notes they can use to follow along?
- Are there discussion questions?
- Are there announcement slides or verbal announcements?
- Do you want them to send a prayer request?
- Do they know how to give online or where to send a donation?

Small Group Gatherings

Remember the purposes and benefits of small groups and the value of continuing them even when social distancing.

- A weekly personal contact to know how they are doing.
- A weekly way to pray for and with everyone.
- A weekly way to build friendships.
- A weekly way to read and discuss the Bible.
- A weekly way for people to ask questions and be encouraged when they are struggling.

Small Group Gatherings

Content Options:

1. The teacher can prepare the lesson as usual.
2. You can ask everyone to read the verses on their own & pick out their three favorite verses. When you get together online, just ask people to share why they liked those 3 verses, why they stood out to them. Give everyone a chance to share.
3. Use 5 to 8 discussion questions to dialogue as a group.
4. Ask people to share prayer requests and have someone lead in prayer.

Small Group Gatherings

How can we see each other online?

1. If necessary, you can break the SS class into smaller groups of 4 or 5 people with a different leader for each group.
2. There are many options – FaceTime on your phone does more than 2 people, Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Zoom, Skype and others.

Strengthening Families

Strengthening family spiritual leadership has always been our goal. But it is convenient for families to let the “church” do the leading when they attend on Sunday and Wednesday.

For several reasons, some parents might be reluctant to teach their children spiritual lessons.

- It is new and they have never done it before.
- They don't want to “prepare” a lesson.
- They might try to lecture, and it won't be a successful experience.

Strengthening Families

1. Can you provide something for families to watch and give them discussion questions to talk about as a family?
2. Can you email a lesson or a scripture passage for families to read and then discuss some questions about the passage.
3. Do you want every family to read a passage every day (Monday-John 1, Tuesday-John 2, etc.) or every Sunday? A deeper way to learn is to ask every person in the family to read the passage and pick out their 1,2 or 3 favorite verses and tell why those verses stood out to them.

Strengthening Your Online Presence

1. Many churches have either a web site or Facebook. Why not have both? They meet different kinds of needs.
2. Other churches add YouTube, Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram and other sites for information, pictures and video.
3. Can you ask members for their email and send out a weekly email or newsletter to strengthen your communication?
4. Have you asked all your church members to “Like” or “Follow” your church on Facebook and “Share” posts?

Strengthening Your Online Presence

5. Have you asked all your church members to search on Chrome and rate your church with a Google Review of 1 to 5 stars and a comment. This is the number one way that new residents look for a church to attend (and also find information about a restaurant, a hotel, or a business' reputation.)

Strengthening Your Website

Ask a friend to look at your website and give you a critical evaluation.

- Is it easy to find your address, your phone, email and the hours of your worship services? Are these on the front page?
- Is it easy to find out how to give online to your church?
- Are the options for small groups in homes and Sunday School classes listed on your website with a current picture?
- Is there a list of community ministries your church does?

Strengthening Your Website

Ask a friend to look at your website and give you a critical evaluation.

- Are there several video or audio recordings of your worship service so a prospect can hear or see your pastor preach?
- Is your website being updated weekly? Sometimes I see church websites that are still announcing Easter events when it is now July! I have seen websites that said they didn't have a pastor when they have had a new pastor for 6 months.

Special Events

Think about how you want to handle special events:

- Baptisms, baby dedication, joining the church
- Weddings, funerals
- Easter, Christmas, Homecoming, Mother's Day, Father's Day
- VBS, Camp, Marriage Retreat, a Conference
- Deacon meetings, Finance Team meetings
- Graduate recognition, church members birthdays and anniversaries

Ministry

Think about how you want to continue doing ministry in the same way or in a new creative way:

- Worship
- Discipleship
- Fellowship
- Ministry to church members
- Ministry to the community

What If This Is The New Normal For A While?

We all assume this will be gone in a few months. But what if it doesn't go away for several months or a year? We know that God will give wisdom to those who ask. He will show us how to adapt.

The early church lived in a culture for 1800+ years that coped with diseases and pandemics like Ebola, Tuberculosis, Measles, Plague, the Flu, Polio, Smallpox, Malaria, Cholera and HIV.

- 165 AD – 5 million people died
- 541 AD – 25 million people died
- 1346 AD – 200 million people died

What If This Is The New Normal For A While?

It seems wise to hope for the best and plan for the worst.

We cannot plan for our church to do social distancing for just a few weeks. We have to plan as though this might last a year.

- If we didn't meet physically for one year, what would we do?
- If we began to meet again at church, but people needed to wear face masks and stay apart at church, what would we do?
- If people were afraid to come back and we needed to continue to provide a physical and an online ministry, what would we do?

God is Able

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!