

# Forced Out - Ministry Without Buildings

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In 2017, I wrote a post entitled The Church is Not the Building So You Do Not Need One. Today in 2020, churches across America cannot use the buildings they have. Whether it is a church with a building they built or a church renting in a school or theater, today the church cannot gather in person. We are in the midst of a real experience that is showing all of us that the church is the people and not a building.

Amid the crisis, we are finding out how the church can BE the church while not physically gathering. We are using the words "social distancing" but we are actually "physically distancing". In our world today we can still connect socially on FaceTime, Zoom, and Facebook live. The church is finding "new" opportunities to connect with people in new ways. While our physical gatherings have been prohibited, the work of ministry has not slowed. In many cases the church is stepping up and serving its people and those in need to a higher level than at any time before. Pastors and church leaders are connecting with their people online intentionally every day. The world is looking to the Church for answers in this season. Here are just a few examples.

- Lake Pointe Church in Dallas has served 100,000 pounds of food and Dallas County has designated all Lake Pointe Campuses an essential service to the city. They will remain open for food drop offs. In turn, they have donated almost 6,000 boxes of food to children and the elderly.
- Churches with avg attendance of 1,000 have seen online attendance of 8,000.
- Church staffs are making phone calls and texts to all members to check on their needs.
- Churches that have never streamed a service are now streaming their services. Media Ministry volunteers are working more than they ever have to seize the opportunity to send the Gospel out through media and online services.

Ministry has not stopped. The doors of the buildings may be shut but the Church, the people, are still advancing the cause of Christ. Is this a new normal that we can sit back and watch? Absolutely not. The reality is while ministry opportunities are on the increase many churches are seeing a decrease in giving. I have heard of churches seeing a 70-80% reduction in tithes and offerings. We must double our efforts to communicate what we are doing and lets call on the Church to join us in the mission to serve others. Many people will donate to organizations that are serving those in need and we need our own people to see that we the Church are leading in serving those in need.

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How can we maximize the ministry opportunity during this crisis?

1. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate – In real estate you have heard the phrase “Location, Location, Location”. In this season we must make sure the message is clear and that it is repeated on multiple platforms so that there is no doubt how we are ministering to others.
2. Prayer Gatherings – Call the Church to Prayer. Model it and make it available online on a regular basis.
3. Giving Options – Continue to develop online giving options and give people opportunities to give.
4. Prepare for the future – At some date we will return to physical gatherings. At that time schools and theaters may be slow to let churches back in their spaces. Or they may be more eager to bring in income. Only time will tell. Churches that own buildings will need to consider if they will continue online services or shut down to encourage people to gather in person. Leadership is critical today and as we navigate the next steps.

Pastor be encouraged that people are watching and following. I know you are preaching to empty rooms but do not be dismayed. The seeds we are planting will reap a great harvest. In this season, stay faithful, innovate, and lead with passion. This too shall pass, and all the glory will be given to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.