



For Such a Time as This – Hope and Faith

RESOURCES

Three practical ideas for mission during lockdown

We have been in lockdown for over a month. The church has responded in amazing ways, pastorally looking after the most vulnerable, coordinating with civic authorities to be part of the local response, livestreaming services and Zooming meetings. We are innovating, uniting and persevering through. Prayer meetings have never been so well attended.

But it is also hard. Many churches are grieving and comforting one another through grief and bereavement. Most churches' income has been impacted by an absence of hall lettings, conference bookings and the fact you can't pass around a virtual Sunday collection plate.

We do need to continue to look inwards and look after those in our church families. But we must not stop looking outwards even though the landscape upon which our eyes fall has dramatically changed. These are times when, perhaps more than ever, those around us who would never walk into a church building are searching for hope and meaning. We must respond to the hunger for the Gospel that is all around us.

If you are a leader who has just about got their head around running a Facebook Live each Sunday, if the WhatsApp groups are all in place and the Foodbank rota sorted, now is an excellent time to think about how to reach out and here are three intensely practical ideas of what to do next:

1. Run an online evangelistic course

It used to be the case that when you ran Alpha or Christianity Explored it would take months of planning, careful consideration of how much pizza to buy and a church-wide debate about the best night to run it. Now, [Alpha](#) and [Christianity Explored](#), amongst others, have moved all their content online and it's never been easier to have a go. In many ways there is a lot less to lose, people are more available than ever, craving connection and many may come to an online course who would never visit a church building. HTB, the home of Alpha, had 1097 sign up to their course in the first 2 weeks of lockdown and many other smaller churches are reporting similar increased take-ups. It's probably worth having a go.

2. Inspire and equip the church

I don't like the phrase social distancing. We are physically distancing, but I think we are socially closer than before. We are spending more time with friends and family, and that is good news for the spread of the Gospel. How can we make the most of this opportunity? Encouraging one another and sharpening each other with the tools to help our friends move closer to a relationship with Jesus seems like a timely thing to do. The Great Commission Team at the Evangelical Alliance will be creating a host of content and running Facebook Live sessions over the coming weeks to help you to do this. [Follow us here to keep up to date](#) and check out the small group material at www.storybearer.com.

<http://www.gather.global/>

<http://www.movementday.uk/>



3. Have a crazy idea or two

So the saying goes, necessity is the mother of invention. My social media feeds have been full of people finding extraordinary ways to keep themselves occupied: from toilet roll keepy-ups to insane trick shots. But I have also seen some wonderful examples of the church being good news. My friend Pat has been dubbed the [Portable Priest](#) as he takes a sound system round the streets of London as part of his daily exercise and leads the socially isolated in Amazing Grace and prayers. It's caught the imagination, but began as a crazy idea from a vicar who exercised his missional creativity. Take a look, spend some time asking God what you might do and have a go.

Colossians 4:2-5 encourages us to pray, proclaim the gospel and make the most of every opportunity. Let's be a church who meet the physical needs of our communities with love, their emotional needs with compassion, but also their spiritual needs with the most contagious message of hope the world has ever known. Make the most of every opportunity.

Phil Knox, Head of Mission to Young Adults Evangelical Alliance

Links and resources:

<https://yourneighbour.org>

www.livingandtelling.org.uk

From Palau Association:

<https://www.hopewithgod.com/>

Loving all Muslims:

<https://www.mahabbanetwork.com/>

Alpha online:

<https://www.alpha.org/alpha-online/>

Agape Resource:

'Ministry from a Distance' webinar (Europe) <https://youtu.be/KJYb7boTPD8>

Book recommendations:

Reappearing Church by Mark Sayers

Evangelism in a Skeptical World by Sam Chan

Story Bearer by Phil Knox www.storybearer.com

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