Regathering the Church Part II: Leadership Toolkit

SBTC COVID-19 Taskforce

This is designed to be a practical companion tool to the SBTC’s resource “Regathering the Church.” We aim to help pastors and church leaders think through ways to navigate this season of ministry with an eye on the next. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been far-reaching, and in many ways we expect they will be long-lasting. We believe that every crisis presents opportunity. We pray the Lord will give you the grace to lead with confidence through this season, and into the next, whatever that may look like.

This tool has been developed not to generalize answers, but to draw out contextual opportunities. You and your team are the experts in your context. Use this toolkit to think strategically through the opportunities in your ministry context today and tomorrow. Regathering the Church Part II: Leadership Toolkit has in mind three things for the church leader: meeting current needs, assessing developing trends, and planning future opportunities.
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Weekly Tasks Checklist

- Prioritize daily devotional time.
- Spend meaningful time with my family.
- Exercise at least 3 days.
- Systematize and schedule the connection with church members and regular attenders through phone call, text message, or handwritten cards mobilizing staff, deacons or lay leaders as necessary. Utilize multiple people and regular pre-COVID communication channels.
- Give special attention to church members who are hospitalized, home-bound, or in nursing homes.
- Debrief from the previous week’s Sunday morning service with a small group of trusted leaders.
  - What went well?
  - What needs improvement?
  - Who is responsible for making each specific improvement?
- Evaluate last week and plan for the next week.
  - Sermon prep.
  - Communicate with your team: every detail from start to finish.
  - Clarify duties and assignments for each individual.
  - Have team leaders debrief with their teams and report findings.
- Check giving trends week over week compared to last year and compared to the current budget. Communicate spending and cash flow management to ministry leaders as necessary.
- Evaluate daily online engagements.
  - Identify, write down, and celebrate wins from the previous week’s online engagement.
  - Clarify weekday online or social media responsibilities with church staff or lay leaders.
  - Clarify who manages daily engagement.
  - Hold staff members and lay leaders accountable.
- Dream and plan for the future.
  - Use the topics in this toolbox to work through one aspect of planning for the future this week.
  - Next week, build on that one area and begin planning in another.
  - Dream God-sized dreams for the future of the church.
- Rest.
Weekly Worship Services

Your worship services will look a little different these days than what you would have called “normal” only a few short years ago. That’s okay. The shape, style and structure of Christian worship services have changed many times through the centuries to address geographic and cultural distinctives. It has always been true of Jesus’s church that she uses every tool at her disposal to gather the saints in worship and to propagate the gospel among the nations.

The church needs to gather for worship regularly. While there is no substitute for face-to-face gathering, it is true that the extensive use of internet and social media presents a unique contextual opportunity for worship services. Reports show that individuals in communities across Texas who had never stepped foot in the church building have been watching worship services online. Reports also show that the number of engagements during online worship services has either matched or exceeded the typical number of bodies in the pews on a Sunday morning. In addition, drive-through and drive-in church services have proven popular and successful as of late.

Meeting Current Needs:
Regarding promoting and conducting our weekly worship services, what trends are developing that may help us better understand what God is doing now and how he may be preparing us for the future?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

1. List out the ways your church has continued worship in this season.

2. Look at the numbers regarding your online worship services:
   + How many people are watching live?
   + On average how many people are sharing the livestream?
   + On average how many comments are being posted on the livestream?

3. What is the general attitude of our church members toward online, drive-in or drive-up worship services today? (circle one)

   NOT RECEPTIVE 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5  
   VERY RECEPTIVE

4. Is our online, drive-in or drive-up worship engaging people in the community who are not normally likely to step foot in the building? (circle one)

   NO ENGAGEMENT 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5  
   HIGH ENGAGEMENT

5. Are our people more likely today to engage with our church’s online and social media platforms than they were before? (circle one)

   NO DIFFERENCE 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5  
   SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE

6. Is the level of excellence increasing in our online delivery? (circle one)

   NO INCREASE 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5  
   SIGNIFICANT INCREASE

7. How is the morale of key leaders toward our COVID services? (circle one)

   DECREASING MORALE 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5  
   INCREASING MORALE
Review your answers to determine key areas of strength as well as those areas that need additional growth. Your responses may change week to week as you ramp up your regather phases, so it would be wise to revisit these questions often. Be sure to check out some of the resources linked here as well as on the sbtexas.com/covid19 site. In addition, the SBTC staff stands ready to assist any church that needs help or encouragement (covid@sbtexas.com).

Assessing Developing Trends:
Are we using every tool at our disposal to gather the saints for worship and the preaching of the Word?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

Are we providing our people weekly opportunities for worship and prayer in a meaningful and biblical way?

Are there any segments of our congregation that are currently unable to participate in our worship opportunities (ex: senior adults, young children, people from a low socioeconomic background, etc.)? If so, what can we do right now to give them this opportunity?

What mechanisms do we have in place to call for a response to gospel presentations, and to follow-up with those responses?

How are we observing the ordinances? Can our church observe the ordinances biblically through this season? If so, how?

Are the meetings we have available engaging to the community?

List every communication tool your church has available (ex: website, drive-in service, live stream, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, direct email, direct mail, word of mouth).

Planning Future Opportunities:
Now that we have assessed our experience and examined the tools at our church’s disposal, what will our weekly worship experiences look like in a post-COVID context?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

What might it look like to blend online worship and engagement with in-person worship and engagement?
Will we continue to stream services online after we are able to worship together in close proximity again? If so, what equipment do we need to secure and who will be responsible for the weekly details and organization?

If we continue to use online platforms for worship services, what will be the primary goal(s)? If to evangelize, how can we tighten up the presentation, appeal, vehicles of response and follow-up system? If to move online engagers to the in-person gatherings, how can we create easy next-steps and onramps to get them to the church building?

If the drive-in or drive-thru church method has been successful, will we use this tool in the future regularly or periodically? If so, when? What benefits do we expect to see?

However we plan to blend current trends with established methods in the future, how will we know if our innovations are producing the desired results?

**Strategize the Path Forward**

→ Write a short description (1-2 paragraphs) of what the future worship experience will be like.

→ List actionable items that need to be accomplished to get there.

→ Who is responsible for each actionable item?

→ How will you measure effectiveness?

→ Set a specific date for a follow up discussion with your team 3 months from now.

**Helpful Links for Resources and Ideas:**

- [sbtexas.com/toolkit-worship](sbtexas.com/toolkit-worship)
  - Effective Online Gospel Presentation
  - Worship in a Time of “Social Distancing”
  - Drive-in Service Insight
Digitizing church engagement has brought great opportunity, but it also presents unique challenges regarding the spiritual health of both church leaders and church members. Some church leaders have chosen to offer daily video devotions for their members. While a great blessing and a helpful tool, there are two cautions.

First, those producing content on a regular basis should keep the long haul in view. Church leaders should sustain, or even increase, the frequency of his or her own spiritual disciplines. If the only time a church leader is spending in spiritual disciplines is in preparation and delivery of content for church members, the well will surely run dry. The church leader must lead from the overflow of a deepening personal walk with Jesus.

Second, make sure to balance content provided by the church and encouraging a personal walk with God for your congregation. Members may be drinking from the wisdom of church leadership more than ever, but they may also be getting used to their church leadership digging the well and drawing the water for them every day. If spiritual health is to thrive through online platforms, our tools of engagement must encourage and teach church members to take responsibility for their own walk with the Lord.

Meeting Current Needs:
Are our devotional activities cultivating healthy rhythms of faith and practice in our people?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

1. My personal walk with the Lord, through daily spiritual rhythms, is currently (circle one):

   (STRUGGLING) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (THRIVING)

2. We are effectively engaging our people regularly throughout the week (not just on Sunday mornings) through online platforms, calling their attention to the truths of Scripture and the ministry of the Holy Spirit (circle one):

   (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

3. We are providing sufficient opportunities for our least technologically confident people to stay connected and grow in their faith (circle one):

   (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

4. Our devotionals and other weekday online engagements are encouraging and celebrating individual/private spiritual disciplines (circle one):

   (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

5. Even in the midst of such a difficult time, our people are growing and pressing deeper into their faith during the COVID-19 season. (circle one):

   (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

Review your answers to determine key areas of strength as well as those areas that need additional growth. Your responses may change week to week as you ramp up your regather phases, so it would be wise to revisit these questions often. Be sure to check out some of the resources linked here as well as on the sbtexas.com/covid19 site. In addition, the SBTC staff stands ready to assist any church that needs help or encouragement (covid@sbtexas.com).
Assessing Developing Trends:
Is our weekday content generating meaningful reflection and celebration of personal spiritual rhythms? How do we know?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

1. Right now, am I properly balancing “doing for God” and “being with God?” Am I developing a hunger for God and a satisfaction in him? Are my private spiritual disciplines being sidelined by my public acts of service?

2. What is the level of engagement from our membership on our weekday devotional posts? What about from non-members in the community?

3. Do the comments from our membership reveal that they may be becoming dependent on our content, or that our content is supplementary to their private devotional life?

4. Through phone calls, emails, text messages, and other offline engagements, what is the spiritual environment of our church body right now? Are we struggling spiritually, surviving spiritually, or thriving spiritually?

Planning Future Opportunities:
In the future, how might we use weekday devotional content to encourage and celebrate private spiritual rhythms for our people?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

1. What is my personal plan for continued spiritual development? What goals do I have for my own Bible reading, prayer life, sacrificial giving, intentional evangelism and personal worship practices?

2. When things look more “normal” for our church, how frequent will our daily online devotions become? Who will be in charge of developing, posting and interacting with our weekday content online?

3. What are some creative ways we can get church members to interact and share their spiritual practices and celebrations through digital tools?

4. Do we have a clear pathway, with a well-developed strategy, for the spiritual growth of our people?
What tools might we use for measuring the spiritual health of our congregation as the months and years pass?

**Strategize the Path Forward**

→ Write a short description (1-2 paragraphs) of what it looks like for a church member to be spiritually healthy.

→ Brainstorm ways the church can facilitate this process.

→ Develop a clear, concise pathway for the spiritual growth of your people.

→ Who is responsible for helping church members move forward in this pathway?

→ How will you measure the effectiveness of your strategy?

→ Set a specific date for a follow up discussion with your team 6 months from now.

**Helpful Links for Resources and Ideas:**

- sbtexas.com/toolkit-spiritual-health
  - Rhythms Disciple-Making Resource
  - Rhythms Disciple-Making Videos
The Lord has not given believers a spirit of fear, but of love, power, and a sound mind. Still, people naturally work out mental and emotional dysfunctions within the context of meaningful relationships. In a time of social distancing, the potential for unresolved mental and emotional troubles is higher than normal.

Even as this season continues, the mental and emotional effects will be long lasting. It is essential to be sensitive, encouraging, and available to the church staff and the people throughout these days. Many people are taking social withdrawal to the end of relational isolation. Mental health professionals expect that relational habits and tendencies formed (or crystalized) during this season may give rise to an increased need for special attention in this area. It is important for the church to think through the mental and emotional health of its leadership and membership both now and in the future.

Meeting Current Needs:
How are our staff and membership processing the strangeness of this season emotionally and mentally?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

1. My own emotional and mental health right now can be described as (circle one):
   - STRUGGLING
   - 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
   - THRIVING

2. Our church staff (or lay leadership) is currently functioning at a high level of emotional and mental health (circle one):
   - STRONGLY DISAGREE
   - 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
   - STRONGLY AGREE

3. Our people, for the most part, are currently functioning at a high level of emotional and mental health (circle one):
   - STRONGLY DISAGREE
   - 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
   - STRONGLY AGREE

4. All of sermons and devotional content are effectively calling our people to be firmly established in the hope that is found in Christ (circle one):
   - STRONGLY DISAGREE
   - 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
   - STRONGLY AGREE

5. We are currently doing an excellent job being intentionally encouraging in all of our communication:
   - STRONGLY DISAGREE
   - 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5
   - STRONGLY AGREE

Review your answers to determine key areas of strength as well as those areas that need additional growth. Your responses may change week to week as you ramp up your regather phases, so it would be wise to revisit these questions often. Be sure to check out some of the resources linked here as well as on the sbtexas.com/covid19 site. In addition, the SBTC staff stands ready to assist any church that needs help or encouragement (covid@sbtexas.com).

Assessing Developing Trends:
What developments are we noticing in the way of emotional and mental health among our church’s leadership and membership?
Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

1. Over the past several weeks, how often have I laughed with my spouse or close friends? Has my general mood become altered in any way? When do I feel most encouraged? Most disconnected? Most stressed?

2. What types of social media posts seem to get the most traction with our people: informational posts or intentional encouragement posts? Why?

3. Are my staff members and lay leaders working well together? Are there any interrelational emotional tensions developing? Are bridges being built? If so, who are the common denominators and what may be giving rise to this?

4. Are our church members interacting positively with one another through videoconferencing and/or social media? Are there any church members that seem to be excelling as natural encouragers?

5. Has our church adopted a strategy or regular polling abilities to learn of our congregation’s well-being?

6. Who are the Christian Counselors in our area (or accessible through videoconference) that may be willing to work with our staff or with our people regarding their mental and emotional health?

Planning Future Opportunities:

Are we developing a plan right now to meet the long-term emotional and mental health needs of our staff and congregation?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

1. Do we have a working relationship with any Christian counselors in our area? If not, how can I reach out to them now to proactively build that relationship?

2. Can we proactively schedule Christian Counselor check-ins with our church staff once or twice a year? How might we fund this?

3. To what degree will I counsel a church member with a presenting mental or emotional health need?
Do we have a working relationship with any Christian Counselors in our area? If not, how can I reach out to them now to build that relationship proactively?

How will we be able to tell, through in-person interaction and online presence, when one of our church member might need help with some form of mental or emotional dysfunction? How will we approach that church member to offer this suggestion or assistance?

How can we plan to utilize our online presence to consistently infuse hope into our church membership and our community?

**Strategize the Path Forward**

→ Write a short description (1-2 paragraphs) of what it looks like for a church member to be emotionally and mentally healthy.

→ What specific tools, resources, or opportunities will we offer in the future to facilitate emotional and spiritual health?

→ Who is responsible for overseeing these tools, resources, and opportunities?

→ List dates for expected progress and/or implementation.

→ Set a specific date for a follow up discussion with your team in the next few months to discuss further details of implementation.

**Helpful Links for Resources and Ideas:**

- sbtexas.com/toolkit-mental-health
  - Hope in the Midst of Fear video:
  - Fighting Temptation PDF
  - Divorce, Grief, and Parenting Helps
  - Battling Depression
  - Form to request counseling
Effective Communication with Church Members

With the increased digitized church and worship experience, new trends may be emerging for effective communication. Effective communication needs to be clear, concise, and consistent. Clarity ensures that your people understand exactly what you intend to communicate. Concision makes it short enough for them to retain and repeat. Consistency repeats for reinforcement.

With the newness of digital platforms for many churches, communication blunders abound. Some are not communicating with enough clarity for information to take root. Some are counting on extensive explanation to get their point across, rather than simplicity. Some churches are not communicating with consistency across social media platforms. This is the season to refine your communication plan and become more effective in saying what you want to say in a way your people will understand, retain, and respond.

Meeting Current Needs:
Are our people adequately informed of our church’s activity schedule and decisions?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

|   | We are appropriately utilizing every tool at our disposal (online, email, text messaging, property signage, snail mail, etc.) to effectively communicate with our people (circle one): |
|   | (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE) |

|   | We are communicating with clarity, concision, and consistency across all communication platforms (circle one): |
|   | (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE) |

|   | Multiple people are reviewing communications before sent to make sure it is clear, concise, and consistent (circle one): |
|   | (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE) |

|   | We believe our people feel appropriately informed on primary church decisions right now (circle one): |
|   | (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE) |

|   | Our staff and leaders are communicating on a regular basis, daily or frequently (circle one): |
|   | (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE) |

Review your answers to determine key areas of strength as well as those areas that need additional growth. Your responses may change week to week as you ramp up your regather phases, so it would be wise to revisit these questions often. Be sure to check out some of the resources linked here as well as on the sbtexas.com/covid19 site. In addition, the SBTC staff stands ready to assist any church that needs help or encouragement (covid@sbtexas.com).

Assessing Developing Trends:
What tools of communication are proving most effective in getting the word out to our people with clarity, concision, and consistency?
Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

> How are our people responding to digital graphic communications? Text communications? Email communication? Video communications? Mailed communications? Website? Social Media?

> Do our digital communications have a synergistic feel? Are we using the same color scheme, font package, bumpers, etc. to effectively and consistently represent our brand?

> Which church members are actively sharing social media posts and seem to have a handle on how to effectively get the word out?

> Are we getting better or worse at being clear, concise, and consistent in our communication?

> What seem to be our major challenges in effectively communicating with our people?

Planning Future Opportunities:
How can we develop an effective communication strategy for our church?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

> What effective new tools of communication might we need to incorporate into our church’s normal channels (text messaging, social media, graphic over video, etc.)? Which communication tools will we no longer use?

> Who might be a good fit, either staff or lay leader, to oversee the communication ministry of our church?

> How can we effectively communicate clear next-steps for our digital audience who may be interested in knowing more about or being more involved with our church?

> In the future, who will put eyes on church communications before they are made public? (Who develops, who double checks, and who disseminates?)

> How can we become even more synergistic in our digital communications (the color scheme, font package, bumpers, etc. that are consistently representing our brand)?
**Strategize the Path Forward**

→ Start by listing all communication tools at your disposal, ranked in the order of their effectiveness for your people.

→ Decide which communication tools you will keep in the future and which you will drop—make a plan.

→ Who is responsible for overseeing communication through each tool? Who develops, who double checks, and who disseminates?

→ List date(s) for expected completion of the revised communication strategy.

→ Set a specific date for a follow up discussion with your team in the next 3 months to discuss and reevaluate.

**Helpful Links for Resources and Ideas:**

- [sbtexas.com/toolkit-communication](https://sbtexas.com/toolkit-communication)
  - Sample Church Communications Plan
  - Improve Church Communications
  - Church Newsletter Tips
  - Communication Strategy Tips
  - Example of COVID Plan (PDF)
  - Web Tools for Ministry
  - Use Slack for Ministry
Online Giving

God is able to meet all of your church’s needs according to his riches in glory. He’s the one who multiplies the church’s resources to accomplish his mission through every season. We believe that your people want to know how to most effectively give toward Great Commission advance in and through your local church. We also believe they are more likely to give regularly and sacrificially when they know how to give and how their gifts are making a difference.

Perhaps before COVID-19 your only method for giving was passing an offering plate during Sunday morning worship services, but now you have been forced to find new ways to make giving available to your people. The thriving congregation of tomorrow will offer multiple avenues for effective giving to God in and through the local church.

**Meeting Current Needs:**
Do we have multiple options for worshipful giving in place, and are our people aware of them?

**Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning**

1. Our giving is keeping pace with budget right now (circle one):

   - (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

2. We have made multiple options available for worshipful giving such as text-in giving, online giving, mail-in giving, and drop-box or drive-by giving (circle one):

   - (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

3. Our people are well informed of the various avenues for worshipful giving to and through our church (circle one):

   - (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

4. There is appropriate accountability in place for all avenues of in-person and online giving (circle one):

   - (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

5. The congregation is appropriately informed of the church’s financial condition (circle one):

   - (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

**Review your answers** to determine key areas of strength as well as those areas that need additional growth. Your responses may change week to week as you ramp up your regather phases, so it would be wise to revisit these questions often. Be sure to check out some of the resources linked here as well as on the sbtexas.com/covid19 site. In addition, the SBTC staff stands ready to assist any church that needs help or encouragement (covid@sbtexas.com).

**Assessing Developing Trends:**
Are we noticing any emerging concerns or opportunities related to giving?
Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

> What percentage of our weekly receipts is coming in from each method (mail-in, online, text, drop box, etc.)?

> What age groups are responding best to each giving platform?

> Are we receiving consistent praises or complaints about one of our giving platforms in particular?

> When are people making online contributions? During services when prompted? A specific day/time of the week? A specific day of the month?

> What percentage of our church membership is regularly giving?

Planning Future Opportunities:
How will we effectively communicate the various platforms for giving in the future, keeping that information before the people without coming across as needy or overbearing?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

> Which new giving methods will we retain in the future and which will we eliminate?

> Will we continue to make a weekly appeal for giving to those who may be joining the service online?

> How can we target certain age groups with giving platforms that are most popular within their demographic?

> How and when will we communicate that the regular, sacrificial giving of the church membership is making a big difference in our Great Commission strategy?
Strategize the Path Forward

→ Start by listing all giving tools at your disposal, ranked in the order of their demonstrated effectiveness in your context.

→ Are there any giving methods you will discontinue or add in the future?

→ Who is responsible for development and communication of giving methods?

→ What specific measures of accountability will we put in place for each method?

→ Set a specific date for a follow up discussion with your team in the next 3 months to discuss and reevaluate.

Helpful Links for Resources and Ideas:

▶ sbtexas.com/toolkit-giving
  ▶ LifeWay Generosity
  ▶ Ways Giving Can Thrive
Pastoral Care

This crisis has raised important concerns and forced pastors to think more creatively about how to connect with their people. The pastor will not always be able to make an in-person pastoral care visit, and when he does his people may be more self-conscious in the future about physical contact. Perhaps there are things to learn during this season, in the way of pastoral care, that will increase effectiveness in the days ahead.

Meeting Current Needs:
Is church leadership keeping up with the pastoral care needs of the congregation?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

1. Church members who enter the hospital feel like they are being appropriately ministered to in this season (circle one):
   
   (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

2. We are staying in touch with and appropriately ministering to our members who are homebound or in nursing homes or rehab centers (circle one):
   
   (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

3. We are making weekly worship experiences available to those members who are unable to access livestream platforms (circle one):
   
   (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

4. When in a face-to-face situation, our leadership is being sensitive to the government’s stipulations and the person’s wishes regarding in-person visits (circle one):
   
   (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

5. We are meeting the pastoral care needs of guests and members who join us online by using prayer lines, messaging, social media comment sections, text-in follow up, etc. (circle one):
   
   (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

Review your answers to determine key areas of strength as well as those areas that need additional growth. Your responses may change week to week as you ramp up your regather phases, so it would be wise to revisit these questions often. Be sure to check out some of the resources linked here as well as on the sbtexas.com/covid19 site. In addition, the SBTC staff stands ready to assist any church that needs help or encouragement (covid@sbtexas.com).

Assessing Developing Trends:
How is this season exposing systemic challenges and opening new doors of opportunity toward meeting the pastoral care needs of our people?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

1. Are there people in our congregation who are becoming less comfortable with physical touches like handshakes, fist bumps and hugs? To what degree might that continue?
Have we received any positive or negative feedback from members regarding phone calls, text messages, gift baskets, or handwritten cards? Do we think this might develop into an opportunity for the future? Why or why not?

Are our people more likely to share their personal needs in closed groups, emails, phone calls, or on the social media page? Are they becoming more or less open with the membership about their needs/concerns?

Is there anyone, in particular, in our church who has become more open to sharing needs and receiving care online than they ever have in person? If so, why might that be and might there be others?

Is video conferencing or FaceTiming membership working as a distance-based solution for pastoral care?

**Planning Future Opportunities:**
How can we become more quickly and effectively responsive to the pastoral care needs of our people without overburdening our staff and lay leadership?

**Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning**

- Can we maximize our staff or leaders’ time by incorporating strategic text messaging, FaceTiming, or phone calling into our rotation of regular weekly pastoral care visits?

- Who on the leadership team is better at connecting on the phone, handwritten cards, or through text messaging? Which of our members prefer these kinds of contact? How can we systematize pastoral care efforts to make these connections effectively and efficiently?

- What standard protocols should we put in place for staff and leaders when making a hospital or nursing home visit? When will we train on this?

- Can we create a standard entry point of connection through text messaging, emailing, or web contact form where our members can share their needs and prayer concerns and know with confidence those are being viewed and considered?
Strategize the Path Forward →

→ Compose a standard protocol for pastoral care visits regarding (1) hospital visitation, (2) nursing home, rehabilitation center, and homebound visitation, (3) relationship-based crisis care needs, (4) follow-up for spiritual decisions, and (5) intentional ongoing personal communication with all church members.

→ Who is responsible for each area of pastoral care?

→ What safety and health protocols need to be put in place for each category of visitation?

→ Communicate clearly with the congregation who (and how) to notify in church leadership when a need arises.

Helpful Links for Resources and Ideas:

- sbtexas.com/toolkit-pastoral-care
  - Pastoral Care through COVID-19
  - Battling Depression
Discipleship / Small Groups

It is imperative that the discipleship and small group ministries of the church function with intentionality through every season. Many churches are finding today that video conference platforms are very effective for small groups meeting together during the week. Some groups still meet at the normal time on Sunday morning. Others have found that more of their group is able to attend on a Tuesday night or a Sunday evening. Even smaller, life-on-life discipleship meetings are being held effectively through video conference platforms today, some with more consistency than before.

Video conference platforms have been at our disposal for quite some time. But during the pandemic, churches are finding that these platforms are not as difficult to use as they perhaps assumed and not as adverse an option to their people as they imagined. The thriving church of tomorrow will not simply go back to discipleship methods as usual, but will work toward a blended approach of in-person and video conference platforms.

Meeting Current Needs:
Are we currently utilizing videoconference platforms with excellence toward meeting the discipleship and small-group needs of our people?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

1. We have made the necessary purchases, and trained small group leaders adequately, to ensure that using video conference platforms we can meet the ongoing discipleship and small group needs of our people (circle one):

   (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

2. We are providing tutorials and assistance for those leaders or group members who need help accessing or understanding video conference platforms (circle one):

   (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

3. Small group members who cannot use video conferencing for discipleship are being provided other opportunities to stay connected to their groups through group messaging, recorded video lessons, etc. (circle one):

   (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

4. Church leadership is continuing to mentor and develop new leaders through this season (circle one):

   (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

5. We have a desire to continue building online discipleship communities and resources in the future (circle one):

   (STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

Review your answers to determine key areas of strength as well as those areas that need additional growth. Your responses may change week to week as you ramp up your regather phases, so it would be wise to revisit these questions often. Be sure to check out some of the resources linked here as well as on the sbtexas.com/covid19 site. In addition, the SBTC staff stands ready to assist any church that needs help or encouragement (covid@sbtexas.com).

Assessing Developing Trends:
How are our people responding to using video conferencing platforms for discipleship and mentorship?
Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

» Of the groups that have been meeting through video conference, which groups are thriving in this season? How do we know they’re thriving and why do we think they are?

» Who are the rising stars of tech-savvy church membership who seem to be proving themselves helpful in tech support and willing to serve group leaders needing assistance?

» Are all groups meeting virtually at the same time they normally meet physically? Which groups seem to be connecting with more people at a different day/time than their usual in-person group meetings?

» Are there consistent praises or complaints from a certain group regarding the video conference platform, group leader, etc.?

» Have any of our smaller, life-on-life discipleship connections thrived through video conferencing? Are there any that have suffered?

Planning Future Opportunities:
As part of our discipleship strategy, how might we blend online, videoconference meetings with in-person meetings in the future?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

» If our group leaders are using several different platforms for video conferencing, is there a platform for which the church can purchase a business license and give access to all leaders? What in our yearly budget can we cut or reduce to make that happen?

» Should we rethink any Sunday morning, on-site requirements to enable groups to meet via a blend of in-person meetings and meetings on different nights of the week?

» How will we count Sunday school or small group attendance if groups choose to meet via video conference on different nights of the week?
Whom are we raising up to be small group leaders, and in their training are we including the nuances of video conferencing?

How might we systematize video conferencing for our life-on-life, closed-group discipleship sessions? Who are our leaders that can thrive in this setting, and how will we communicate this opportunity to new believers?

Are we developing and training new leaders from digital groups?

**Strategize the Path Forward**

- Clarify your discipleship purpose by writing a 1-2 paragraph explanation of what it will look like for your church to have an effective discipleship ministry. End that explanation with a 1-sentence summary of your church’s goal for discipleship/small group ministries.

- Who oversees the discipleship and small-group ministries of the church?

- Which tools/platforms for discipleship will you continue in the future and which will you discontinue?

- Schedule a follow-up meeting in 1 month to reevaluate and make final plans for the implementation of your newly revised discipleship and small group strategy.

**Helpful Links for Resources and Ideas:**

- sbtexas.com/toolkit-discipleship/
  - Using Zoom for Bible Studies
  - Host Small Groups Online
  - LifeWay Free Bible Study Resources
  - LifeWay Free Videos
  - Education Resources and Helps
Family Worship

The family unit is to be a place of intentional discipleship. It should be a microcosm of church life, a playing field for spiritual practices, and a training ground for future disciple-making disciples of Jesus Christ. At the same time, there is a spiritual family that supersedes every biological bloodline. The home must be a place of intentional discipleship and family worship that is guided and aided by church leadership as a component of its focus to build God-honoring families in the body of Christ.

In a world of social distancing, Moms and Dads and Grandmas and Grandpas are relearning the role of being the primary disciplers of children in the home. This is not a bad thing. When it comes to children’s ministry, the church exists to supplement the spiritual activity of the Christian home. When it comes to marriage enrichment, the church should be a coaching center and a support mechanism for the spiritual togetherness that is cultivated in the Christian home.

Meeting Current Needs: Are we providing adequate resources and encouragement for our families to take ownership of Christian discipleship in the home?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

We are providing parents in our church with the tools and encouragement they need to lead family worship with their children (circle one):

(STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

We are providing married couples of all ages and stages with the tools and encouragement they need to enjoy meaningful devotional time together in their homes (circle one):

(STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

We are championing and celebrating those parents, grandparents, and couples in our church who are doing a great job with family discipleship and worship (circle one):

(STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

Our families feel well informed of the resources available to them for family discipleship and worship (circle one):

(STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

We are especially keeping any eye out for those church members we know entered this season with preexisting relational tensions, and we are providing intentional encouragement to them (circle one):

(STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

Review your answers to determine key areas of strength as well as those areas that need additional growth. Your responses may change week to week as you ramp up your regather phases, so it would be wise to revisit these questions often. Be sure to check out some of the resources linked here as well as on the sbtexas.com/covid19 site. In addition, the SBTC staff stands ready to assist any church that needs help or encouragement (covid@sbtexas.com).

Assessing Developing Trends:

How are the families in our congregation responding to the opportunities and resources we offer for home-based family worship?
Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

- Are our people more likely to hold regular marriage or family devotions when we provide digital tools for them to use such as the Lifeway apps, SBTC Family app, YouVersion Bible app, etc.? Which of these digital tools seem to be most popular among our people?

- Is it possible there may be a future in digitizing our small group curriculum or sermon notes through the apps that families are regularly using in their homes?

- Is it possible that families in the church are becoming dependent on the production of the church staff in order to have a meaningful daily devotional life? How can we begin to refocus on empowering and championing them to own family worship and family devotions?

- What married couples seem to be natural encouragers of younger married couples, through social media and online connections?

- Are our families in our congregation more likely or less likely to hold regular family devotions when someone from church staff is encouraging them on the specific devotions of the day through email, text messaging, or social media?

Planning Future Opportunities:
How might we effectively synthesize in-home or family based discipleship with on campus discipleship in the future?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

- Are there seasoned married couples in our church who would be great mentors for younger married couples? How can we equip them with the tools needed and encourage them to pursue mentoring relationships?

- To what extent will we continue the daily/regular video devotional presence from church staff and leaders? When should we begin to reduce their frequency and repackage their purpose from instruction to empowerment?

- Can handheld devices be used to aid preaching and teaching in the future? Perhaps by uploading sermon notes to the YouVersion Bible app or encouraging each small group member to use online Bible study guides with their mobile devices?
Should we consider offering guided in-home devotions and discipleship so that couples and families are walking through the same Scriptures at the same time? If so, how can we systematize and celebrate it, and who will be responsible for it?

How will we address the daily discipleship needs of church members and guests who do not live in a Christian home?

**Strategize the Path Forward**

→ How does in-home or family based discipleship fit in to the discipleship strategy of your church? Write a 2-3 sentence explanation.

→ Identify technological tools already at your disposal that you can use more effectively to synthesize family worship and discipleship and on-campus worship and discipleship.

→ Decide to what degree your weekly pulpit ministry will integrate with your home-based discipleship and family worship ministry.

→ List specific steps that need to be taken to effectively integrate family worship and home-based discipleship with the on-campus ministries of the church. Decide who is responsible for oversight and implementation of each step.

**Helpful Links for Resources and Ideas:**

- [sbtexas.com/toolkit-family](sbtexas.com/toolkit-family)
  - SBTC Family Resources
  - SBTC Family App Lessons
  - NAMB Interactive Family Devotional
  - Keys to Family Worship
Revising the Budget

Cash flow is critical in seasons of economic stress. When the economy contracts, church members lose their jobs and the frequency of giving is unpredictable. Having 3 to 6 months of operating expenses in the bank is a blessing. But many churches do not have this cash flow cushion, and even those who do need to think strategically, right now, about how their budget may need to change in the months and years ahead.

Crisis is much more about opportunity than danger. The church of Jesus has thrived through every historic season of difficulty. With eyes firmly fixed on the hope that is ours in Christ Jesus, creativity and relentless optimism are built-in to the Christian experience. That means we can rethink our budgeted plans through crisis with an expectant confidence that God will supply all of our needs according to his riches in glory. The following conversations and decisions must be a collaborative effort. No one person should make budget cut decisions on his or her own. Use the church’s committee or staff structure, according to the bylaws, to determine who will be in these conversations.

Meeting Current Needs: How can we evaluate the current financial status of our church and make plans for the wise stewardship of kingdom resources in this season of economic stress?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

> Church leadership is well aware of the status of our cash reserves, current giving trends, and how long we can continue to operate like normal based on these realities (circle one):

(STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

> The appropriate leaders are assessing budgeted savings from cancelled activities and they are beginning to evaluate possible activities to cancel or postpone between now and the end of the fiscal year (circle one):

(STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

> We are aware of dollar amounts being saved right now due to recent decrease in facilities usage, and by not paying hourly employees such as contract labor, part-time janitors, nursery workers, event coordinators, kitchen crews, etc. (circle one):

(STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

> Church ministers and other employees feel appropriately appreciated and taken care of in spite of the ambiguity of our current financial situation (circle one):

(STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

> We are effectively communicating giving methods and keeping the church appropriately informed about the finances and budget (circle one):

(STRONGLY DISAGREE) 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 (STRONGLY AGREE)

Review your answers to determine key areas of strength as well as those areas that need additional growth. Your responses may change week to week as you ramp up your regather phases, so it would be wise to revisit these questions often. Be sure to check out some of the resources linked here as well as on the sbtexas.com/covid19 site. In addition, the SBTC staff stands ready to assist any church that needs help or encouragement (covid@sbtexas.com).
Assessing Developing Trends:
Are we appropriately assessing the giving trends of our congregation toward the wise management of kingdom dollars today and in the immediate future?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

1. What is the weekly giving trend, year over year, over the past several months? Is there a noticeable trend upward or downward?

2. Since the crisis began, are our people giving as frequently, less frequently, or more frequently than before? Why do we think this is the case?

3. When the budget is reworked and non-essential cuts are made but we still project a shortfall in the budget cycle, what are the next phases? Do we cut salaries in Phase 1, events or ministry areas in Phase 2, and positions in Phase 3?

4. What is the projected dollar amount of budget shortfall through the end of the budget cycle?

5. Knowing how the economy and unemployment situation has affected our people, do we expect giving to return to normal rates in the coming months, or do we expect more giving or less giving? What economic, community, or spiritual factors would affect this one way or another?

Planning Future Opportunities:
How might the current economic crisis affect giving trends in next year’s budget cycle and following, and how do we plan to accommodate these projected changes?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

1. Should we come up with two or three possible budgets for the next cycle, to be chosen and adopted based on the year-end actual giving of the current budget cycle? Or should we adopt shorter cycled budgets than the traditional one-year?

2. Are there expenses that were previously optional that have now become necessary (ex: video conferencing subscriptions, church copyright or streaming licenses, tech equipment maintenance and upgrades, etc.)?
Can we ask ministry staff/leaders to rethink their budget areas for the remainder of this cycle and their requests for the next cycle, estimating a 30 percent or 50 percent reduction, but helping them think through creative ways to effectively minister in their respective areas?

If our church has been in existence for a long time, would it be more helpful to start from zero and build a new budget from the bottom up, beginning with fixed costs (buildings, utilities, staff, insurance, etc.), then adding in missions and ministry allocations until we get to the projected amount of giving?

Are there any areas we must proactively make difficult decisions to ensure the future of our specific local church?

Do we need help with this? If so, who can we call right now to get us headed in the right direction thinking about our next budget cycle?

Strategize the Path Forward

1. Decide where there is excess in the budget already. Trim the budget to exact expected expenditure.

2. Clarify with precision the fixed costs within your budget including utilities, key staff, and missions/ministries you cannot compromise.

3. Develop a 3-5 phase plan, based on giving projections, for what you will recommend cutting from the budget next year.

4. Be sure to have complete agreement on the phased reduction from key leaders in the church, then communicate the plan with the congregation.

Helpful Links for Resources and Ideas:

- sbtexas.com/toolkit-budget
  - Budget Cutting
The church’s bylaws and other governing documents exist to provide a structured, legal process for accomplishing church business in an orderly fashion through democratic processes. Decisions made by the church must be in accordance with governing documents. However, the church must not fall into the trap of limiting necessary ministry and business because those documents will not allow it.

Governing documents need regular updating to serve the church body most effectively. While navigating uncharted cultural territory, there will likely be some situations that suggest a needed bylaw change. But in the thick of it all, the church must find ways to accomplish the work of ministry in accordance with governing documents.

**Meeting Current Needs:**
How will we conduct necessary church business right now in accordance with our governing documents?

**Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale: STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We are currently able to conduct our church’s necessary business in accordance with our governing documents (circle one):</td>
<td>(STRONGLY DISAGREE)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(STRONGLY AGREE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church leadership and membership understand and agree on which business items are essential right now and which are not (circle one):</td>
<td>(STRONGLY DISAGREE)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(STRONGLY AGREE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church leadership is aware of any emergency or extenuating circumstance language in our bylaws that might allow for a smaller number of church leaders to make necessary operational decisions when the church is not able to physically gather (circle one):</td>
<td>(STRONGLY DISAGREE)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(STRONGLY AGREE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We know whether our governing documents allow for vote by proxy or distance-based business meetings through a video conference platform (circle one):</td>
<td>(STRONGLY DISAGREE)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(STRONGLY AGREE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have sought counsel from a lawyer or professional parliamentarian to interpret areas of our bylaws that may not be as clear on these issues as we would like (circle one):</td>
<td>(STRONGLY DISAGREE)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(STRONGLY AGREE)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Review your answers to determine key areas of strength as well as those areas that need additional growth. Your responses may change week to week as you ramp up your regather phases, so it would be wise to revisit these questions often. Be sure to check out some of the resources linked here as well as on the sbtexas.com/covid19 site. In addition, the SBTC staff stands ready to assist any church that needs help or encouragement (covid@sbtexas.com).

**Assessing Developing Trends:**
Do our people feel they are being appropriately included in important church decisions right now, in accordance with our governing documents?
Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

How are other churches similar in size and geographic location accomplishing the business of the church right now?

Do we feel the frequency of our business meetings is effective or is this season revealing that the frequency may need to change?

What percentage of our people is active in video conference platforms for their Sunday school class or small group? Could that translate into a possibility for business meetings?

Are people more likely in this season to want a smaller group of trusted church leadership to take on more responsibility in the way of church operations?

Planning Future Opportunities:
What needs to change in our governing documents and processes to set us up for success regarding making necessary operational decisions in the future?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

In extenuating circumstances, could we have fewer regularly-scheduled business meetings and still effectively accomplish the business of the church?

What would need to change in our bylaws in order to have the option to use a video conference platform for business meetings if needed?

Can we use video conference platforms in the future for smaller committee meetings instead of requiring committee members to gather physically?

Does our church need to purchase a subscription to a video conference platform to make this possible?
Strategize the Path Forward

→ What decisions in our church should require action by the full congregation moving forward? How frequent would the church need to meet to ensure diligence in these decisions?

→ Have the appropriate team of lay and/or staff leaders draw up suggested changes to the governing documents to allow for the necessary changes.

→ Be sure, in your suggested bylaw revisions, to make provision for emergency situations that may prevent the church from gathering in business session when an important decision must be made.

→ Prepare for and plan a date in the future to present these suggested changes to the congregation for a vote, in accordance with your church’s existing governing documents.

Helpful Links for Resources and Ideas:

- sbtexas.com/toolkit-polity
  - Church Covenant Helps Care
Long-Range Planning

Church will never be exactly the same again. The shape of church as we know it is changing. No one knows the extent of the changes that will take place, but it is wise not to underestimate the possible far-reaching ramifications of this crisis. The shape of church life has changed countless times over the past two millennia. The message has not changed. The mission has not changed. But the method constantly does. The churches that embrace this season of digital creativity and innovation will thrive in the decades to come. The churches that simply go back to church life as usual will, likely, not.

The COVID-19 crisis is a generation-shaping event. As the culture around us shifts, the church must rise to the occasion of taking the timeless gospel hope to people in the newness of every season. Just think: for decades we have tried to figure out how to get people out of their homes and into our buildings, but in only a couple of weeks, virtually every church in America figured out how to get church out of their buildings and into people's homes. Let's think strategically through how this crisis may reshape the way we do church in the future, and how your church may adapt well to this opportunity.

### Meeting Current Needs: Does the leadership team have the support needed to innovate and create new opportunities to accomplish our church’s goals in this season?

#### Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

1. **We have identified a leadership team that can help think creatively through today’s needs and tomorrow’s possibilities** (circle one):
   
   ![Score Range](1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5)

2. **Creative people and innovators on our church leadership team currently feel the freedom to throw out ideas and suggest new things** (circle one):
   
   ![Score Range](1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5)

3. **We are intentional to not anchor our church’s identity in the way things were, knowing necessary changes are coming** (circle one):
   
   ![Score Range](1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5)

4. **We are beginning to gently, strategically speak innovation and creativity into the way we are doing church right now, so that when innovation is implemented in the future it will have been expected and possibly even desired** (circle one):
   
   ![Score Range](1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5)

5. **We are keeping the gospel at the center of every new experience and opportunity in our church’s life right now** (circle one):
   
   ![Score Range](1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5)

Review your answers to determine key areas of strength as well as those areas that need additional growth. Your responses may change week to week as you ramp up your regather phases, so it would be wise to revisit these questions often. Be sure to check out some of the resources linked here as well as on the sbtexas.com/covid19 site. In addition, the SBTC staff stands ready to assist any church that needs help or encouragement (covid@sbtexas.com).
Assessing Developing Trends:
Who are the innovators in our church family or on our church staff who are thriving in this season, coming up with creative solutions and dreaming up new possibilities?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

- Are there certain staff members or lay leaders who are rising to this occasion as unexpected, gifted leaders?

- Is there a word or phrase that seems to be catching on among our people or the people of our community (ex: “a church for the city,” “church gathered, church scattered,” “the church has left the building,” “prayer changes things,” “we are the church,” etc.)? Where and when are people using this terminology?

- What new opportunities or methods seem to be catching on in each area of ministry (ex: children’s ministry, student ministry, women’s and men’s ministries, prayer ministry, worship ministry, etc.)?

- Are we aware of how our church is being perceived by the community through this season?

Planning Future Opportunities:
What will it look like to be a church that continues to embrace the innovation and creativity of today as we dream up and implement the new possibilities for tomorrow?

Discussion Questions for Team-Based Evaluation & Planning

- In the next two weeks, can each ministry area leader come up with a proposed plan for how they will use new digital means to connect with, disciple, and lead people in their specific ministry area?

- How will we continue to give meaningful opportunities to newly discovered leaders, whether they are on staff or in volunteer positions of influence?

- Will we incorporate worship service livestreaming and/or video conference meetings into our ministry plan moving forward? If so, to what extent?

- Are there words or phrases resonating with our people through this season that we need to incorporate into reshaping or repackaging our vision moving forward?
Strategize the Path Forward 

Identify the key creative and innovative leaders on your staff or leadership team. Write down their names and a few bullet points on each person, indicating their unique strengths in innovation and creativity.

Schedule a time for these individuals to gather and dream together (a brainstorming session). Use the discussion questions in this section to help guide the conversation and come up with some questions of your own.

Be sure to make an implementation plan and schedule for anything that is decided. End the meeting with a recap of: (1) What exactly was decided; (2) Who is responsible for each actionable item; and, (3) Expected timetable to complete each assignment.

Schedule another meeting like this in the next 3 months to check in and dream together again.

Helpful Links for Resources and Ideas:

- sbtexas.com/toolkit-planning
- Transition Online Visitors to Attenders:
- Steps to Prepare for Post-COVID:
- Post-COVID Predictions:
- Ministry During and After COVID