



The Stewardship Coach Volume 7 / Issue 11

This is a special edition of the Coach entitled, *Your Church's Response to the Coronavirus*.



The Coronavirus is on everyone's mind and it is imperative that your church responds in a way that builds confidence and assurance. To fail to address this issue is to miss an opportunity. Failing to address the issue also makes you appear irrelevant and out of touch. The Church has always taken the lead in matters impacting society. Now is another opportunity for us to step up and into. How will you respond?

I must be honest with you, that up until now, I have seen little from Church leaders on this issue. We cannot afford to ignore what is on everyone's mind.

This is not political! I have been shocked to have some Christians push back on my writing on this. It is sad that, in America, everything is politicized. At the sake of turning some of you away from following me, I agree with the steps taken by the current Administration with regards to the virus. The politization of this is sickening. Let's show the world how the Church responds!

A three-pronged approach for churches. I have developed a three-pronged approach to how we, as churches, should respond. This Coach is dedicated to helping you respond with a plan of action addressing this issue.

First, we need to realize that this is a reality check for churches. Here are my major points I shared in last Monday's group teaching time.

- **Every church will face crisis.** Some are internal while others, like Coronavirus, are external. Either way, you *will* have to deal with crisis.
- **Every crisis can have wide-spread impact.** Whether Coronavirus becomes a pandemic or not, it will impact your church. How you respond will determine how deep and widespread the impact.
- **Every church thus needs a crisis plan for any and all circumstances.** You need an active shooter plan, a weather impacted plan, a disaster plan, etc. While you cannot predict every crisis, you can adapt strategies that transcend any crisis you face.

My admonition to the Church about the Coronavirus is this, **pandemic or not, now is the time to prepare!**

Now, let's discuss my **3-Pronged Approach**. First, it begins with ...

Caution – We need to be cautious, yet at the same time, we must not panic. We need to be aware and smart. You want to communicate to your members that you are taking this crisis seriously. I recommend the following:

- **Establish a church health plan.** What steps should your church take to assure the safety of those that attend? What policies need to be enacted? Have a plan and stick to it.
 - **Make sure all your volunteers know the plan.** Get your lay leaders on board with the plan.
 - **Communicate churchwide.** Having a plan that addresses this crisis will build confidence in your members.
 - **No more handshakes or holy kisses!** No joke, but our Senior Pastor last Sunday enacted that directive during our time of "forced fellowship." All churches should do the same.
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- **Re-think Communion.** For those that take Communion weekly, it is time to re-think how you pass out the elements.
- **Wash your hands!** One key toward keeping this virus contained is cleanliness. It might not be a biblical verse that cleanliness is next to godliness, but today you do want clean hands.

Compassion – Now is our chance to show the love of Jesus. The question you should be asking is, **How can our church help?** Here are some things:

- **Pray!** Liberals rail against we Christians for praying, but we know the power of God released through pray. Call your congregation to aggressively pray over this crisis.
- **Education and awareness** – We live in a day of misinformation. Your church can be a leader in sharing news and information to keep your congregation fully informed.
- **Be first responders** – We in the Church have always been the leaders in the care of those impacted by crisis. Let's look for ways we can minister to those that are hit hardest by this crisis. Let's be the first responder to this.
- **Consider starting a Coronavirus Fund.** Americans love to give to support crisis relief. Your denomination might already have a fund established that you can give to. If not, establish your own and then give the money to whatever organization or ministry appropriate. This allows your members to express generosity, giving them the feeling they are doing something positive.

Sustainability – This third prong is internal. Your mission is too important to let a virus stop you! The next six to eight weeks *could* determine how the rest of your year looks. Attendance *will* be impacted, which *will* impact giving. How will you sustain your ministry through those weeks and beyond? Let's pray for the best and plan for the worst.

Sustainability plan – Remember my Brooks mantra, get a plan and work your plan. The following are a few points that should be addressed in your sustainability plan.

Think connection/engagement, not attendance. Frankly, you are already being forced into this kind of thinking with the shift in attendance. As this virus spreads, you can expect attendance to fall. When attendance is off, so is giving. Let's get ahead of that potential crisis. How?

Use today's technology! Recently I started coaching a pastor whose church runs under 100. They live-stream their services and provide them on a delayed basis for viewing. Take a peek at my Bonus Section for ideas on how to use technology to keep engaging with your community.

Put a renewed focus on online giving. How will the Coronavirus impact giving? That is always my first question. I am encouraging all my clients to put a focus upon their online giving platforms. Online giving *can* help offset a giving decline. See my Offering Talk Section for how to position this.

Remember, *now* is the time to prepare! Check out last week's webinar below for more information.



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Monday Mornings With Mark will be a repeat of last week's edition. To listen to the recording go to, <https://youtu.be/wASesfV5WM0>

This Week's Offering Talk

Here is this week's talk, which has a focus on the Coronavirus.

Helping Us Help Others

The Coronavirus is on everyone's mind. While we continue to pray for the best, we are also preparing for the worst. Here at YOUR CHURCH NAME, we have enacted policies and procedures that we believe will keep all of us safe. Your church leadership is continually monitoring the spread of the virus and its impact upon our community. I want to assure you that we are taking this crisis seriously and, again, commit to you that we will do all in our power to keep everyone in our fellowship safe.

We are committed to staying open for as long as it is safe to do so. All services will continue until we no longer feel it is safe to congregate. When and if that time comes, we will find ways to stay engaged with you and with our community. (If you have an existing online presence for your services, mention that here.)

No matter what happens with regards to the spread of this virus, we are committed to keeping up the life-giving ministry God has called us to provide. Whether or not the virus spreads into our community or not, we want to be positioned to continue to help others. The leadership of our church is exploring how we can help those impacted by the Coronavirus. We will let you know how you can give to support that work.

As we approach *this* offering, I want to encourage you to stay faithful in your giving. Your generosity makes all that we do possible. As always, we are grateful for your generosity.

One final reminder. Remember, we provide multiple ways by which you can give to our church. Use whatever way is best for you. I do want to encourage you to consider setting up your giving to be automatic. This will greatly help us *if* we are forced to cancel services. One of the great things about today's technology is that even if you are not here in person to worship, your worship through giving can be here in your place.

Remember, when you help us financially, you are helping others. Let's give generously today!

Bonus Section

The following are ideas that work with any crisis that impacts attendance and giving.



Live Stream your services – The picture on the left is of one of my clients that is located across the river from Saint Louis, in Illinois. They get a lot of weather impacted weekends. This is a screenshot from their Facebook page. Notice that those watching can sign an online connect card, registering their attendance. They can also quickly and easily give their offering by clicking on the provided link. This is one key way to stay engaged and connected with your church *if* the Coronavirus causes us to miss holding services.



Use Social Media for information and to connect with your members. The picture to the left is of Pastor Steve Hogg announcing that due to weather their church would move to only one service the next day as a result of projected bad weather. Not only did this serve as an announcement of changed service times, it served as a reminder to give faithfully online.