

changing church

TOOLKIT | LEADING WELL

10 TOP TIPS

ON FINANCES AND FURLOUGH



As followers of Jesus...

Lockdown has created significant financial challenges for the church as well as wider society. Our survey of almost 900 leaders showed that two thirds of churches are concerned about the loss of offering income: while most carry enough reserves to cover their loss of income for at least six months, over a quarter are concerned about paying staff.

There may be difficult conversations ahead around finances and furlough, but the opportunities and challenges need to be met with honesty, honour and hope. The financial and economic challenges over the coming months are likely to be more significant than those we have already faced.

1. Prayer

We need to spend time in prayer seeking God's wisdom and guidance for what is right for our church and context in light of COVID-19. We are ultimately stewards of the resources that He gives us.

2. Planning

Life has not returned to normal. It is difficult to predict what the next phase will look like, but churches should plan for challenging times ahead for themselves and in the communities in which they serve.

3. Reserves

The Charity Commission has made it clear that this is exactly the sort of moment that reserves are for. The aim is not to avoid spending them, but to use them wisely to navigate this crisis.

4. Honesty

Churches should be honest about the state of their finances and the need for tough conversations in relation to staffing and other future decision-making.

5. Furlough

Our survey found that 31 per cent of churches have furloughed some or all of their staff. Decisions will have to be made about whether staff will return part time, full time or not at all. Advice may need to be sought for those not returning.

7. Volunteers

The church in the UK is made up of five million people including two million evangelicals. Volunteers are probably the church's greatest asset in this challenging moment. Churches may have smaller staff in future but more volunteers.

9. Honour

No matter what decisions are made, can we find ways to honour staff and volunteers who have gone above and beyond during very challenging times?

6. Care

Consideration should be given to ensure the equitable treatment of those who were furloughed and those who were not. Lockdown has been demanding and now churches are reopening again. We need to ensure staff and volunteers are cared for and get some rest.

8. Communication

Churches should clearly communicate the impact of lockdown on their finances and what they plan to do. This enables the whole church to 'own' the situation and be part of the solution.

10. Generosity

The temptation in tough times is simply to cut expenditure, but the real challenge is to be generous, redouble our commitment to our local churches, and continue to give to mission and compassion ministries.