

changing church

RE-ENTRY

10 TOP TIPS

ON PROCESS



As followers of Jesus...

We have learned to worship, pray, encourage, witness, disciple and serve in new and creative ways during this pandemic and the associated lockdowns. Re-entry provides opportunities and challenges to be navigated with love, wisdom and grace. They say that re-entry is the most dangerous part of any space mission, and that may also be true for churches. The past year has created a church without walls, releasing many into new ways of ministering. It has also been challenging and tiring for many. As we approach the process of re-entry, here are some top tips.

1. Prayer

Spend time prayerfully reflecting on what God is saying, and seek His guidance on what is right for your church and context in light of COVID-19 and the considerations for the re-entry process. What is God saying?

2. Theology

Our theological foundations will impact how and when we re-gather, especially as we consider issues such as mission, pastoral care, protecting the vulnerable and providing hope. What is church?

3. Team

Collective decision-making spreads the responsibility and allows different gifts and experiences to input on health, policy, community and ecclesiological considerations. Be clear on who gets to decide what so expectations are adequately managed. Who decides what?

4. Safety

Ensure you are complying with government regulations, the best available scientific and health advice, as well as guidance from your denomination or network – and keep your insurers informed. What is safe?

5. Pace

Re-gathering is unlikely to be a binary moment when everything suddenly starts again. It is more likely to involve a step-by-step approach – a marathon rather than a sprint. Pace yourself and protect your staff and volunteers who have already made huge transitions. Is your plan realistic?



7. Flexibility

Be ready to adapt based on how your church and wider community responds and updated advice (eg on children's work or singing).

9. Communication

The situation has the potential to change rapidly, and people may have concerns and questions. Clarity and regular communication are key to bring people not the journey of re-entry.

6. Planning

Create a realistic plan, taking into account staff capacity, volunteers, cleaning and the needs of the most vulnerable. What are you stopping, what are you continuing, and what are you starting?

8. Hybrid

Consider running a blended ministry, continuing an online offering for those unable or unwilling to attend in person, while acknowledging the extra workload that will entail. Are you doing hybrid?

10. Rest

Change and uncertainty is tiring. The past year has been extremely demanding for so many people, including church leaders and volunteers. Churches will need to find sustainable rhythms that create space for rest.

