

PASTORPEDIA™

Cutting Edge Conversations for Pastors and Church Leaders

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What should we never....?

Chance of a lifetime!

Well it could be! Most of our states and governors are saying the “reopen” word, so it’s a good time to evaluate if anything should not be reopened! Not to be sneaky but to be wise!

There might have been a few events that were just to fill the calendar or keep people busy or because “that’s what we always did on that evening”! Those are not terrific purposes, for sure. Maybe they should not be resuscitated.

It’s a good time to think if “discipleship” really means just getting together or if rather it’s a small group that applies the Bible to their character and heart and has a degree of accountability. Maybe all men or all women.

Might even be a good time to insert prayer into all the groups instead of pretending that Wednesday night is “prayer meeting night” when only six percent of the church comes!

And certainly the appropriate time to perhaps add something that really helps the needy.

So here we go with opinions, and then you go with decisions.

*Thanking you for the privilege,
Knutte, Jeff, Jim*

What should we never reopen at church?

- Anything that is dead or you always wanted to close!
- COVID gives the church a great time to reevaluate staffing, budget, and the essentials.

Why is the church guilty of allowing things to exist that have seen better days?

Jeff Bogue

- We should never reopen self-serving programs. We should never reopen idols like nationalism. We should never reopen: blow to budgets, token staff, or ineffective programs.
- Guilt. Tradition. Fear of hurting people's feelings – or offending someone.

Jim Brown

- Change requires hard leadership decisions and can cause a level of discomfort for many people. Many pastors don't want to lead through this because of the hits they might take.
- There is often sentimental value attached to ministries, properties, and possessions—that makes it difficult to drop anything. During a change a pastor must give vision that supports the change and honors the people from the past.
- It's hard work.
- Lack of visionary leadership.
- Often the leadership team has lost touch with its community because it has become so inward focused and has a false perspective of what is an effective way to reach their community.
- Pride will often keep us from acknowledging something is dead.

Knute Larson

- Because we are nice. We're not trying to be mean. And there's always someone who likes a certain program or event to continue, so we want to be kind to them. Even if it is not the best decision.
- Most things look good on the schedule. It is for leadership to decide if they also do good.
- And, honestly, sometimes we as leaders never evaluate the good of a program or event or strategy. And in these changing days, that's not a healthy habit of neglect. And not all change is bad. (When I was growing up in Pennsylvania before the Civil War, they called the Sunday evening hour the "evangelistic hour." You can imagine how many unbelieving people flocked to church on Sunday evenings at 7:30! Who are we kidding?)

What activity or emphasis that was dormant during COVID-19 should be left to die?

Jeff Bogue

- Ineffective legacy programs.
- Programs that tie down resources; instead, give those resources to effective programs.
- Any program that was dormant and not missed.

Jim Brown

- That answer is determined by the local church's location and type of ministry.
- I think many places were able to update technology and did away with many paper trails. We no longer use bulletins, for instance.
- Honestly, some staffing cuts and restructuring should happen.

Knute Larson

- Probably only you that are living there can answer that. But we have to be honest and we have to think about time and effort and money. And where people are today. Some meetings are just to have meetings and people who are active in the church can easily become "groupies" who are in several small groups and medium groups and have no time to meet the people they are always being told to meet, the unchurched.
- Today many churches are being very careful about what they call discipleship. In a sense everything is discipleship of course—if you study the Bible to help you grow and be a disciple, of course. A group of over eight or nine with men and women is more of a study group and a community group and that's great. Strong discipleship and accountability probably belong to a group of 3 to 7 men or 3 to 7 women meeting regularly to study the Bible and talk about their hearts. Seems like every pastor and every director on a pastoral staff should have one of those groups that he or she leads.
- It might be very helpful if some groups that meet twice a month begin meeting on zoom once a month after the kids are in bed, in the case of young couples. That might be a great help to people who don't want to be gone too many evenings in the month. Surely some board decisions or staff decisions can be made on the screen rather than driving to and from for a shorter meeting.
- Changing the angle of the question a little, we are also aware that live-streaming is here to stay, and that some people will connect with us by video rather than in person, at least at first. We must be ready for that and welcome them.
- In many places passing the offering plates or other traditions that had lots of touches involved might be left in the dust.

How do you maintain friends while squelching a program?

Jeff Bogue

- You cast vision and be patient.
- Have lots and lots of conversations.
- Have a funeral in which we celebrate what God did, while releasing it.

Jim Brown

- Celebrate their past successes and achievements.
- Thank them for their service and see if there is a new ministry for them to serve in.
- Make sure you pray and spend time hearing from the Lord and then approach them in love and be authentically honest.

Knute Larson

- My sarcastic side wants to ask, Would someone really end a friendship because his or her program was squashed? Was the love-friendship based on mutual agreement as friendships seem to be in Washington DC?
- Pray. Explain. Communicate. People hate changes and surprises, and if you surprise them with a change, you may be in trouble.
- “As much as lies within you, live in peace with all men.” Try hard. But all of us as leaders must do what is best for the church, not for a friendship. We must try as hard as we can, but our main job is not to keep everyone happy. Or to keep them all busy!

Pastorpedia is a resource provided to you by Momentum Ministry Partners. Please contact us at info@buildmomentum.org or 574.267.6622 if we may be of any help to you or your ministry!

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