

Your Weekly Reaching New People Newsletter

When will our church get back to "Normal?"

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Over and over again, I hear church people say, "*When we get back to normal*"....as if at some point things will return to the way they looked before March 2020 and everything will be the same (and presumably our churches will be fine). If you have uttered this phrase, or heard someone in your church say it, I would like to lovingly, challenge that myth.

Think of all the the things that have changed during Covid and will not return to pre-covid "normal". For example:

- **More people now shop online than ever before and many will never return to the malls (think Sears, JC Penny, etc.)**
- **Many people have learned to stream TV series and movies and regular movie theaters are going out of business.**
- **There have been record sales of home exercise equipment as people couldn't safely go to gyms and they may not renew their memberships.**
- **City office buildings lie vacant as companies decide that having workers at home is a better use of resources. That practice will continue long after the pandemic.**

See the trends? So why would we think the church will just return to "normal?" Obviously it won't. Online ministry is here to stay and churches will continue to learn how to be a hybrid church. Many like to have the option of downloading, at their convenience, a worship service or a resource. New people have discovered churches through online activities and we will need to adjust what we do to help their journeys of faith. We are living into a "new reality", and while that is painful and often exhausting, it is a good thing.

The old "normal" wasn't so great! 85-90% of churches were in decline. Many congregations were on the brink of closure. Many more were isolated from their community and having little impact. Yes, we are in the wilderness, trying to find our way. But there is no going back to Egypt. Whatever, the "Promised Land" of the future looks like, we are going to have to navigate towards it, led by the Holy Spirit. We in the church have a great opportunity to connect the Good News to people in ways never possible before.

My hope and prayer for each of you is that for every longing for the "good old days", there will be a fervent hope for a bright future for God's Church.