

changing church

RE-ENTRY

5 KEY QUESTIONS

ON PROCESS

1. What does it look like to love Jesus and our neighbour in the context in which we find ourselves?

Online church services have enabled many people who would not have entered a church building to check out church. As churches re-gather in person, there will be a focus on re-connecting with those we haven't seen for a year. However, churches must also welcome those who encountered Jesus during the pandemic and have never been to a church or participated in sung worship. Gathering is important, but it must be done in a way that doesn't put people at unnecessary risk, welcomes newcomers and remains missional.

2. What do we stop, start or continue?

Churches have been innovative over the past year. Some initiatives are unique to lockdown and will need to stop. Some ideas will need to continue because we are not going back to the way things were before the pandemic. There will also be a need to continue to innovate as guidance changes and as we all adjust to the 'new normal'. These decisions will require wisdom based on prayerful deliberations and collective decision-making.

3. Who decides what?

Re-entry won't be binary. A range of decisions will be made, probably over a long period of time. These will raise issues around good governance, compliance, risk and opportunity. It is helpful to discuss and agree who is accountable, who is responsible, who needs to be consulted and who needs to be informed at each stage.

4. How do we ensure our approach is gracious and honours others?

Everyone will have different views on what is appropriate at what stage. There will always be another church doing it better and there will always be someone in the congregation with a different perspective. Collective decision-making along with clear and regular communication will really help. We also need to honour others who choose a different path, and have the grace to acknowledge there will often not be a 'right' way and that it's possible to get it wrong.

5. How do we balance hope and pain?

There are going to be a whole range of decisions that have to be taken, probably over a reasonably long period of time. These will raise issues around good governance, compliance, risk and opportunity. It is helpful to discuss and agree who is accountable, responsible, needs to be consulted, and who should be informed at each stage.

It is important that we move ahead soaked in prayer, rooted in scripture, passionate for the gospel and committed to one another in love.

