



IDEAS AND RESOURCES FOR CHURCHES

As we monitor and respond to the coronavirus, Family Research Council is providing a variety of resources for churches. Specifically, we have put together a list of best practices for churches to gather, serve, pray, and stay informed during this unique and in many ways unprecedented time.

FRC is also following the latest updates from the White House, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This page provides links to the latest recommendations from health and government officials.

On March 20, President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Secretary Ben Carson joined Tony Perkins and 800 pastors to provide a briefing on the administration's response to the coronavirus and how churches can be a strategic partner for the government during this crisis. We encourage you to [listen to the briefing here](#).

WAYS TO GATHER

In this time of quarantining and social distancing, the church can still meet and gather together in different ways. While not every church needs to adopt all these practices, there are ways we can still “gather” in the days ahead while ensuring we don't contribute to the spread of the virus:

- Hold “drive-in” worship services. Church members can come to the church's parking lot for worship. Local radio transmitters/short-wave radios can be used for broadcasting audio.
 - Many real-estate agents use local radio transmitters. Here is a [link](#) to the Christian Real Estate Network, which pastors may find useful in locating/borrowing a transmitter.

- Livestream services and church gatherings to stay connected. Ways to use technology:
 - Facebook Live
 - YouTube Live
 - Communicate with older members through email and phone calls
 - Conduct staff meetings using Zoom, FaceTime and conference calls
- Churches with more advanced technology should consider partnering with other churches and allowing them to use their facilities and technology to record services.
- Set up a 30-day church calendar for prayer and fasting.
- Meet in small groups instead of one large gathering.
- Encourage church leaders to call each family 1-2 times a week to pray for them and stay connected.
- Record short videos & devotionals for members to send out on social media/email lists.

WAYS TO SERVE

- Complete this [Church Response to COVID-19](#) form if your church is willing to serve as a staging area for food distribution and parking lot testing.
- Offer benevolent funds to those facing financial hardship.
- Provide housing for students who are being required to vacate school housing.
- If possible, keep food pantries well stocked and include cleaning and sanitizing products.
- Think of creative ways to serve older members, such as picking up groceries and prescriptions. Establish a system for checking-in on those who may be living alone, the elderly, or other vulnerable people. Visit elderly members and pray at the windows of their homes.
- Encourage families to spend time together that includes prayer, sharing meals, playing games, and family worship.
 - Southern Seminary Professor Don Whitney has put together a [helpful video](#) on how to do family worship.
- Engage youth groups and teens by keeping in regular contact with parents and students. Encourage students to serve home-bound members in ways that are helpful and in compliance with the latest CDC guidelines.

WAYS TO STAY INFORMED

- The White House has [released guidelines](#) on slowing the spread of coronavirus.
- The most up to date information related to the coronavirus can be found on [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov).
- The White House and CDC are encouraging people to listen to and follow the directions of state and local authorities.
- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has released a list of Recommended Preventative Practices for Faith-based and Community Leaders, which we [encourage you to read](#). HHS is posting regular updates on its [website](#).

WAYS TO PRAY

President Trump [declared](#) Sunday, March 15 a National Day of Prayer “for all people who have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic and to pray for God’s healing hand to be placed on the people of our Nation.” To guide our prayer, FRC has outlined several ways we can prayerfully respond to the ongoing threat posed by the coronavirus. These prayer points are posted on [FRC.org/pray](https://www.frc.org/pray) and can be shared in this [Facebook video](#).

Specifically, Christians should commit to frequently praying for the following leaders:

- President Donald Trump
- Vice President Mike Pence
- Secretary Alex Azar (HHS)
- Secretary Steven Mnuchin (Treasury)
- Dr. Anthony Fauci (National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases)
- The White House Coronavirus Task Force
- Congressional leadership
- Governors and mayors across the country
- All health care workers and public health officials
- Researchers in the global scientific community

The coronavirus outbreak has forced churches to hold services in new, creative ways. This interruption in our routine should remind us that the persecuted church around the world is regularly forced to gather in unconventional ways. As we pray for our country, let us also remember persecuted Christians around the world. For more thoughts on the persecuted church, see FRC's [latest op-ed](#).

Additionally, your church is invited to join the [UNITE714 global prayer movement](#) where Christians are encouraged to pray at 7:14 each morning and night, remembering God's promise in 2 Chronicles 7:14 that when we humble ourselves, unite in prayer and seek His face, He will hear us, He will speak, He will forgive, and He will heal our lands.

RESOURCES FOR CHURCHES

There are many helpful resources for churches and denominations. Here are a few.

- Lifeway Christian Resources is offering churches free access to its digital giving platform for the next 90 days. The website is lifewaygenerosity.com/coronavirus. Given the impact on tithing, this is an especially important resource. Lifeway has launched a full resource page at lifeway.com/coronavirus.
- Ministry Grid is offering [free training](#) to help churches develop a pandemic response plan, digital pastoral care, and counsel for using technology such as live streaming.
- GuideStone Financial Resources has compiled a list of [free resources](#) for churches and ministries to navigate financial questions arising with the move toward online services and social distancing.
- Church of the Highlands in Birmingham opened a [virus testing site](#) on their campus.
- The Association of Related Churches has a [myriad of resources](#) for churches to consider.
- For veterans in your church, the Department of Veteran's Affairs has a resource page. Veterans are encouraged to [consult this page](#).
- Dr. Ronnie Floyd, the President of the SBC Executive Committee, wrote a letter for pastors and missionaries. His letter is [available here](#).

LEGAL RESOURCES FOR CHURCHES

Under normal circumstances, it would be impermissible under our laws and the Constitution for the government to tell a church it cannot meet. But certain emergencies, such as natural disasters and pandemics, do present temporary but substantial risks to public health and safety. As long as the government is not singling out and targeting religious gatherings for restriction (while permitting non-religious gatherings to take place), it is allowed to enact policies restricting all gatherings of a certain size in cases like this.

- Eric Dreiband, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, joined *Washington Watch with Tony Perkins* to discuss the religious liberty issues surrounding the question of whether governments may shut down churches. [Listen to the interview.](#)
- First Liberty, a religious liberty legal group, has published a [one-page guidance letter](#) addressing concerns about religious liberty.

[FRC.ORG/CHURCH](#) will continue to be updated with new information and resources.