

Why You're Not Out of the Woods Yet—3 Keys To ReOpening Your Church Well

By [Carey Nieuwhof](#) | 0



You've been operating in crisis mode for months now.

You've made pivot after pivot with little time to process or prepare. You've made the best decisions you could with the information you had and prayed that it would work.

Adrenaline has ruled the day.

As we move into the heat of summer, it looks like you might

be able to come up for air. You might even be finding what feels like a new groove.

Perhaps your perspective on what “church” actually is has shifted. Online church can work. In fact, it is working!

Your ministry has continued to exist despite the odds. Giving hasn't been impacted as much as you feared. You may have actually seen an increase in attendance and engagement. How amazing!

BUT.....you are not out of the woods yet!

Much of the world is now moving in the direction of re-opening and this will undoubtedly affect your church. It's time for you to think beyond this pandemic into the future of your ministry.

It's exciting to consider the prospect of “going back to normal.” But the truth is, there is no “going back to normal.”

There will continue to be new obstacles and realities in the road ahead and you must remain adaptable.

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As you move towards re-opening your church, you must continue to innovate.

If we've learned anything over the last 30 years as we've helped churches fund their vision, it is this: economic stress doesn't cause financial hardship, it exposes it. The ingredients were lying beneath the surface all along.

Are you beginning to feel that today? Are you concerned that, while you may have survived to this point, the months ahead still feel a little scary? Now is not the time to stop innovating.

Resist the temptation to relax and instead get serious about these 3 key components of your ministry foundation

1. Focus Your Ministry

Simple is almost always better, especially now.

Instead of trying to be all things to all people, focus hard on who God called you to reach and what you do best to reach them. Focus on the areas within your church where you naturally excel.

Identify what is absolutely essential for moving forward and jettison the rest.

Here are some key metrics to help you evaluate which ministries qualify:

- - Alignment with your core mission and vision.
 - Alignment with The Great Commission
 - Number of people engaged
 - Correlation to church growth
 - Measurable results or impact

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2. Flex Your Staff

Borrowing from Jim Collins, you want to spend some time evaluating whether you have all the right people on the bus and whether they are in the right seats to help you execute your new focused ministry plan.

This is an area that many church leaders struggle with because they aren't willing to make the hard but necessary choices.

There are some vital questions you have to explore here but, what's most important is to follow through on the answers.

- - Where do the strengths of your staff align best with the new focus?
 - Where do you have gaps that need to be filled?
 - Which people don't really fit? How do you help them transition well?
 - Where can you mobilize volunteers to replace or supplement full-time staff?
 - What is your plan for investing in those people continually so that they are well prepared for the changes and growth ahead?
 - Who can come alongside your church and offer new expertise and perspective for the season ahead?

[Who can come alongside your church and offer new expertise and perspective for the season ahead? -@SteveCaton CO Click to Tweet](#)

3. Rethink Your Finances

You've simplified your ministry and aligned staff and volunteers to make it work. Now it's time to assess your finances and determine what is needed to provide sustainable and predictable funding going forward.

Here's a truth we've witnessed over and over at Generis as we've helped churches fund their vision for the last 30 years: The economy doesn't cause financial stress, it simply reveals what was lying beneath the surface all along. If your approach to generosity is not supported by effective systems and concrete principles of biblical stewardship, you will consistently experience a gap between your resources and your vision.

What can be done to close that gap and get healthy?

Here are 7 great places to start.

1.
 1. Spend some time evaluating overall giving data and what it is telling you about your people and their commitment to your mission.
 2. Develop a purposeful process to surface and express gratitude to new givers.
 3. Cast vision for the value of recurring giving and recognize the people that take that step.
 4. Implement a system to catch lapsing givers before they fully leave your church.
 5. Tailor giver communication based on different levels of engagement and commitment.
 6. Pay very close attention to changes in giving patterns. There are stories behind those changes and you don't want to miss them.
 7. There are very few things that are more powerful than connecting stories of life-change to the generosity of your people. So, make story-telling a regular part of your worship experience.

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Re-opening the church matters.

We know that you look forward to the day you can physically gather together with your church body. As you eagerly wait for that day to come, don't waste the time you have today to be strategic and to continue innovating so that your ministry can thrive in the face of an ever-changing reality for months to come.

Generis has recently released a free resource that can help you navigate this 3-part framework.

It's called "Beyond: Forward Focus – Planning the Critical Next Seasons for Your Ministry:" [Download it HERE.](#)

If you're looking for help tailoring this to your unique situation and culture, learn more about our [Forward Focus Framework Coaching](#).

Today's post is written by Steve Caton, Chief Growth Officer at Generis.

Steve works closely with the Generis Leadership and Consulting Team to develop innovative strategies to help churches and organizations close the funding gap by creating a sustainable culture of generosity that can fund their vision for years to come.