

The Church Doctor® Report provides a quick read of strategic and influential information. This information is free to share as long as the source is respected: The Church Doctor® Report, www.churchdoctor.org. (To sign up: email johnwargowsky@churchdoctor.org)

The COVID-19 New Normal—Stay at Home: Unique Christian Opportunities

When I was a pastor over the years, I visited hundreds of shut-ins and disciplined others to visit them as well. I always wondered what it would feel like to be homebound.

Now, as a Church Doctor, I am one—along with millions of people all over the world, including you. How are you doing? What are you doing?

What is your motto these days? Before the coronavirus pandemic, mine was, “What is on the schedule today...and this week?” Now, our universal motto is, “We will get through this.”

Is that it? As a Christian, is that the only objective—“get through this”? As a Christ follower, here is some food for thought:

1. Many of those who are not believers are wondering: “Why would God do this?” If you get that question, are you prepared to answer? Consider this:

First, disease is NOT God’s Plan A. It is the result of human rebellion. It is part of the fall into sin. It is a result of a broken world that God wants to put back together. Secondly, the Bible says, “We know that in *everything*, God works together for good with those who love Him...” (Romans 8:28, emphasis mine).

Who do you know, in your social network of friends, relatives, neighbors, people where you work, or go to school (or used to!), who may be far from God? List them. Pray for them. Ask God to give you an opportunity to share “the hope that is within you.”

Kent R. Hunter is the founder of Church Doctor Ministries. He is the author of numerous books including



his two most recent books: *Restoring Civility: Lessons from the Master* and *Who Broke My Church? 7 Proven Strategies for Renewal and Revival*, both available on www.amazon.com.

www.churchdoctor.org

E-mail Kent: kenthunter@churchdoctor.org

2. Be ready! Whenever there is a major “event” or “challenge”—when it is over—there is a short window of opportunity.
 - After World War II, churches experienced a surge in attendance, including many who were new “seekers” as well as many who were prodigals returning.
 - After 9/11 there was a boost in worship attendance, but it quickly faded.
3. Ask your church leaders to consider, whenever this is over, to schedule an Easter celebration.
 - No one knows the real date of Easter anyway, and God probably doesn’t care. He cares about people!
 - Plan, *now*, to invite everyone in your social network to your Easter celebration. If anyone shows interest, but seems a little reluctant, offer to *bring* them to church with you.
 - Ask your church leaders to design the event more like an evangelistic crusade rather than a typical “feel-good,” traditional Easter service that is often directed to long-time Christians.
 - Have *trained* “greeters” everywhere, starting in the parking lot.
 - Schedule extra services, including one in the evening.
 - Have some special fellowship time afterward. Provide plenty of space (and time) for people to mix and mingle. (This will be both therapeutic after the social drought *and* help you build the glue of *relationships*—one of the powerful elements God uses to bring people to Himself.
4. Most Christians who *don’t* participate in Bible study, or read Scripture regularly, say “I don’t have time.” Others say, “I feel uncomfortable.”
 - If you are not in your Bible every day—right now is a great time to start. Unless you are a first responder, doctor, nurse, and a few others, you now have more time.
 - If you find the Bible challenging to understand, go online and order a modern translation.
 - Consider trying *The Message* version. It is not a word-for-word study Bible, but a meaning-for-meaning impact Bible.
5. The church in America is declining. In this “window of opportunity,” this time of social distancing, read at least one book resource that will equip you to be part of the solution to turn the Christian movement around in America. Don’t leave this for the staff. You are the church, too!
6. This is a great time to grow your discipline of prayer.
 - If you need help, make a list of people and issues that are on your heart.
 - Use the list as a prayer guide.
 - Add to it and change it as needs change.

It is up to you! This is a unique moment in history. You can focus on the challenges or you can focus on your unique opportunities. And it is true: We will get through this!