

## ***Making Plans for Your Church Moving Forward in 2021***

**2020 Blindside.** Let us all be truthful. Most of us never imagined that this pandemic would close church doors or drastically affect our church attendance. We never imagined it would last so long, take so many lives, and seemed to cause most churches to take a defensive stance, scrambling to take control of a situation most never saw coming. Many of our pastors have told us that they had to quickly learn other ways to safely connect to their members through electronic means.

Even though some churches faced economic hardships in 2020, most churches report that their giving were close to “normal” and with the blessing of the Payroll Protection Plan, some are actually finishing up the year with a surplus. We are praying that another governmental blessing to be offered in late 2020 or early 2021.

Another issue is planning events, outreach, and services for 2021. Some pastors state they are looking forward to “getting back to normal” by fall of 2021. Even with the vaccines, it is unrealistic to believe the church, community, or nation will return (back) to “normal” by fall. As a church should this be our goal? And what about activities before then? Do we wait until the pandemic is slowing down to start planning and if so, does this mean we have wasted 6-12 months of opportunities and outreach? The question remains, “Should we operate our church from a defensive stance (coasting) until things get better or are there ways to objectively plan to move our church forward and outward in 2021 and of course in a safe manner?”

People in our church and community awaits our decision. It is imperative that our churches remain focused on the Great Commission and make a difference in the hearts and lives of individuals all around. Without the church, what hope does America have? We can help others to “fear not” and to place their faith in the One who can bring “everlasting peace”. The church can be a tremendous help for those in need or are hurting.

For most, 2021 can be still challenging but we must move forward with better and greater ways to accomplish our goals. Again, America needs what we can offer. Can we position ourselves for this? Listed below are a few ideas on planning 2021 for your church. If you have any additional comments or suggestions, please contact us.

### **10 Ideas on Moving Your Church Forward in 2021**

- **Begins with prayer.** Even if our church is blessed to have great leaders and staff members, our goals and objectives are inferior to God’s. None of us predicted this pandemic, but He knew it was coming and He will know how your church can move forward more effectively with His Plan.
- **Begins with Planning.** There are many questions that may still be lingering throughout 2021, such as:
  1. Do we maintain and enforce safety precautions? How will we bring our congregations

back in face-to-face settings without risking their health?

2. Address unanswered questions such as, “Will people come back?” “Will giving remain constant, go up, or go down?” “How can we get new people to visit our church?”
3. Revisit and evaluate any positive and negative this pandemic revealed.
4. Create a strategic plan for your church that includes your goals, objectives, mission, outreach, and general direction of your church. Many events were canceled this past year. What events are you continuing or starting? What are your target dates? What do you need in place to successfully kick these off?
5. Will you continue broadcasting your services through electronic means? Pastors have told us that 2020 created the urgency and means to transmit services to more than just our members. This can continue being a positive outreach opportunity for your church.
6. Using your strengths, objectively brainstorm with others on how this plan will successfully move your church forward with everyone working together and one accord.
7. Develop a formal budgeting plan for 2021 to insure adequate funding for your mission strategy. It should also include a plan for equipment and salaries. Do not forget to include capital improvements if needed.
8. Planning and expectations should be in writing and achievable. What good are goals if they are not achievable or not communicated well with others? A lack of communication is a lack of planning and a lack of having a defined plan leads to operating “less-than” we could be operating.
9. You may want to develop a slogan or theme for 2021. These are good to help communicate a universal thought, goal, or vision for the church.
10. You may want to take this time to review employee goals and job descriptions. You can review these with each employee as well as communicating your vision for 2021. You can also share how instrumental each employee will be in this vision.

- **Begins with Monitoring.** Monitor your goals and objectives on a regular basis to make sure you are on track. Modify or adjust as needed to ensure the success you are hoping for.
- **Begins with the Right People.** A church does not have to have a large payroll or staff to ensure success, but no church can operate without people. Every church must rely on volunteers to fill the gaps needed to make every church run effectively! The key is finding the right personnel to help your church to move forward in a way that produces positive results.
- **Begins with Communicating to Your Church Family and Community.** Take time to communicate your goals and objectives to the church and advertise this regularly to the community. Your church family and workers need to invest in your vision! Getting people involved and “on the same page” can result in positive results. Remember...Many people can accomplish much more than just a few. Look for ways to keep your people engaged.
- **Begins with Fruit.** This could have easily been listed first but nothing comes before prayer. We need His (the Lord’s) guidance, we also need to plan, and monitor our progress from time to time. We are hopeful we have the right people with the right spirit to communicate what we are hoping to accomplish. But...without love, joy, peace,

longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, why would anyone want to be a part of your church family? This is a must. A good leader will remind and maintain the "Fruits" in every meeting and event.

- **Begins with Realness.** People have been hurt during this pandemic. Many are looking for answers even if they may be unaware of what they need. The church has a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in the lives of thousands of people in 2021 but again, the church must be real. People are looking for a *real church* with *real people* who *really care*. The church should be a light and hope for all to see. It may mean that our church may look a little different in 2021. Are you willing to do this for the Kingdom of God?

These are only a few planning ideas for you and your church in 2021. We believe 2021 brings wonderful opportunities to reach out to even more people. Jesus is still the answer to so many needs and people in our Nation. But the Lord uses us, the church, to accomplish His mission and outreach to others.

We are simply encouraging pastors and churches to refocus on what God has called us to be...His vessel, hand, and instrument in bringing others into the Kingdom of God. Learning from our past and moving forward with His guidance, we will surely accomplish much more in 2021. May God bless you for what you do for the Kingdom of God.

*Pastoral Care Staff*