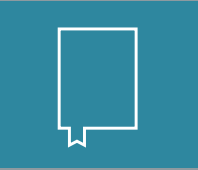


A Step-by-Step Guide for Leading a Relaunch Church Meeting



ASPEN GROUP



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IN MARCH 2020 when COVID-19 hit the U.S., your church likely faced the unexpected and overwhelming challenge of closing your doors. You may have had to quickly figure out how to stream services and move ministry activities online.

Now you're grappling with the daunting details of reopening your facilities for in-person worship and gathering in ways that foster COVID-safe practices. You and your church leadership team are likely clamoring for answers to the myriad questions you're wrestling.

At the same time, you need to lift your eyes, look out at the horizon and ask, "What have we learned about our church in this crisis that can help us prepare for a new season of ministry?"

This is the driving question that prompted us to develop the resource, "**Key Questions to Prepare for a New Season of Ministry.**" As you focus on short-term solutions to reopen your facilities, we want to help you also think through long-term strategies to relaunch your church for maximum ministry impact.

This guide is designed to help you facilitate a Relaunch Church meeting with your ministry leadership team, including an agenda you can use (and customize). Our hope is that this resource will provide you with a turnkey way to gather with your leaders and collaborate on a strategy for relaunching your church for a new season of ministry in light of COVID-19.



HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR RELAUNCH CHURCH MEETING

To help you facilitate a productive Relaunch Church meeting, here are some tips to prepare for your meeting and an agenda you can customize to conduct a robust conversation with your leadership team.

1. Who Should Be Part of a Relaunch Church Meeting?

We recommend inviting your key church leadership team to participate in a Relaunch Church meeting. Try to keep your group to 10 or less in order to have the most effective working group. This can include staff leaders as well as key volunteers, but they should be individuals who have extensive knowledge of your church's operations and ministry programming. You will want to designate someone to serve as the meeting notetaker/ scribe to capture insights and action items during the large group discussions.

2. What Your Team Will Need to Prepare for the Meeting

- Make sure everyone has a copy of "**Key Questions to Prepare for a New Season of Ministry**" (print or digital PDF)
- Make sure everyone has a copy of "**Key Questions Assessment**" (print or digital PDF)
- Make sure everyone has a copy of your customized Relaunch Church Meeting Agenda (see sample agenda on p. 10)
- If you can't meet in person, send everyone a calendar invitation with a link to a video call (Zoom, GoTo, or a video conferencing platform of your choice).

3. What to Do Before the Meeting

Create Groups

- After you've identified who you want to invite to your Relaunch Church Meeting, divide your team into three groups—one group to focus on the section in the "Key Questions" PDF that are related to culture, another group on leadership, and the third group on ministry.

Assign Pre-Work

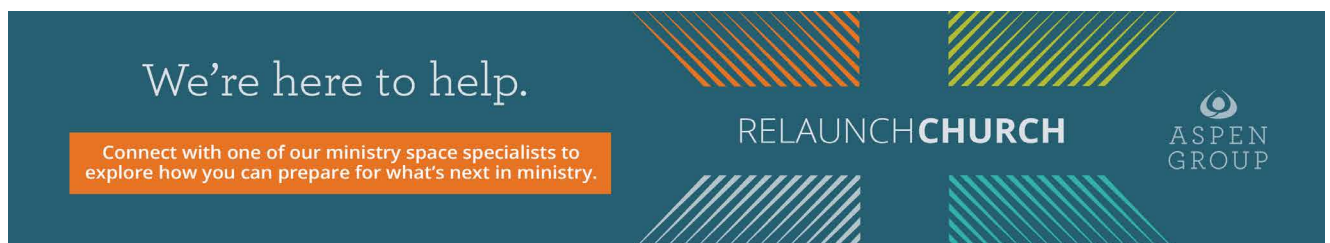
- Assign each person to one of these group—Culture, Leadership, or Ministry. Ask each person to spend at least an hour before your meeting to reflect on and write down their individual responses to the questions under their assigned section of the "Key Questions" document. Because of the significance of this discussion, it's a good idea to get your team thinking about the topic prior to your meeting so you don't have to spend too much time at the beginning of the meeting getting people ramped up to engage in the conversation. Each person should highlight the questions they feel are most relevant and pressing for your church so they're prepared to share their ideas with their breakout group during the meeting.

Prepare Agenda

- Customize the Relaunch Church Meeting Agenda at the end of this guide and share it with your team before your meeting, along with instructions on how to prepare for your time together.

Determine Meeting Objective

- The purpose of the Relaunch Church meeting is to create a strategy for moving forward as a ministry in a COVID-19 world. This meeting is not for the purpose of solving tactical issues about how to reopen your church as COVID-19 restrictions ease. It's to take a longterm view of where you're heading and what you'll pursue as a church in light of all you've learned during this era of COVID-19. Spend some time in advance of the meeting to articulate the "why" of this meeting so that you're prepared to share the objective of the meeting with your team.





RELAUNCH CHURCH MEETING AGENDA (LEADER'S VERSION)

Following is an outline for how to facilitate a conversation based on “Key Questions to Prepare for a New Season of Ministry.” We recommend scheduling approximately 4-5 hours for this meeting, or spreading it out over two to three meetings:

1. Pray (10 mins)

2. Leader: Establish the objective of the meeting. (Emphasize that this meeting is for the purpose of creating a longterm strategy for moving forward in ministry in the midst of COVID-19, not a meeting to discuss short-term reopening tactics.) Provide a brief overview of what you'll cover in the meeting. (20 mins)

3. Break out into groups for Culture, Leadership, and Ministry (or video breakout groups if you're meeting online). (90 minutes)

- a. Each breakout group should identify a spokesperson for the group. Using the Key Questions Assessment grid, the spokesperson should keep notes on the group's conversation and document decisions to report out to the larger group on “What's Right,” “What's Wrong,” and “What's Missing” for your group's set of questions (Culture, Leadership, or Ministry).

- b. During the breakout, individuals should share the questions they've highlighted from the "Key Questions." Collectively, the breakout group should determine which heading each person's highlighted questions fall under: What's Right, What's Wrong, or What's Missing (see sample below). Try to pare down questions to 1 or 2 under each heading that feel the most relevant or critical to solve. (30 mins)

BREAK (10 mins)

- c. Together, the breakout group can add a list of additional questions to consider, and potential solutions or next steps under "What's Right," "What's Wrong," and "What's Missing." (40 minutes)
- d. Review the potential options listed for each category and pare ideas down to 1 or 2 recommended next steps to share with the large group. (10 mins)

PREPARING TO RELAUNCH YOUR CHURCH
KEY QUESTIONS ASSESSMENT

	WHAT'S RIGHT	WHAT'S WRONG	WHAT'S MISSING
CULTURE	We're deeply connected to our local school district and understand the challenges of families in our community.	We aren't paying attention to the changing demographics in our community.	Older adults. We attract mostly young families.
LEADERSHIP	Our key leadership roles are filled.	We don't have a pipeline of lay leaders.	We don't have anyone who can focus completely on digital engagement and online church.
MINISTRY	Online church attendance has grown since we've been doing Sunday worship online.	We don't know how or when to reopen children's ministry.	We don't have a plan for continuing online engagement after we return to church in our building.
FACILITIES	Our parking lot can provide outdoor space for live gatherings at church.	We don't know how to handle social distancing with kids if we reopen our children's ministry.	We don't have multiple rooms within our building to sub-divide people into smaller-sized groups for in-person gathering.

One thing I/we commit to doing as a result of the above is: _____

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BREAK (15 mins, or more as needed)

5. Return to main group (or main video login) (45 mins)

- a. Leader: Reconvene as a large group. Going in order of Culture, Leadership, and Ministry, ask the spokesperson from each group to share their group's insights and ideas for "What's Right," "What's Wrong," and "What's Missing." (30 mins)**
- b. After all three groups have reported their insights and ideas on culture, leadership, and ministry, discuss and document any key themes that emerge or consistent threads that run through all of the insights shared. (15 mins)**

6. Return to Culture, Leadership, and Ministry Breakout groups (60 mins)

- a. Discuss Facilities questions and place responses under "What's Right," "What's Wrong," and "What's Missing" worksheet. (45 mins)**
- b. Prioritize your list according to immediate, short-term, and longer-term, or according to gathering size (up to 10, up to 25, up to 50, up to 100, 250+) (15 mins):**

BREAK (15 mins, or more as needed)

7. Return to main group (or main video login) (60 mins)

- a. Leader: Have each breakout spokesperson report out on "What's Right," "What's Wrong," and "What's Missing" for facilities (30 mins)**

- b. Have each person select their top 3 items from each list.**

(For "What's Right," selecting top 3 items will help determine if there's consensus among your leaders about what is going well at your church. Celebrate these items! For "What's Wrong" and "What's Missing," you'll be able to narrow down items to address by identifying the top 3 that the majority of your leaders agree are most significant.)

- c. Brainstorm potential action items or next steps your leadership team can take on the top 3 items for “What’s Wrong” and “What’s Missing.”

8. Pare your list of next steps down to 5 or 6 action items and identify who will run point on each item. (20 mins)

9. Identify when your team will reconvene to report on status of action items and to determine next steps. (10 mins)

10. Close with prayer.



RELAUNCH CHURCH MEETING AGENDA

Date:

Time:

Location:

Attending:

1. Pray (10 mins)

2. Objective of the meeting: To create a framework for how to prepare your church for the next season of ministry, and a brief overview of what you'll cover in the meeting (20 mins)

3. Breakout Groups: Culture, Leadership, Ministry (90 mins)

- a. Identify a spokesperson for each breakout group. Using the **Key Questions Assessment** grid, the spokesperson should keep notes on the group's conversation and document decisions to report out to the larger group on "What's Right," "What's Wrong," and "What's Missing" for your group's set of questions (Culture, Leadership, or Ministry).

- b.** During the breakout, individuals should share the questions they've highlighted from the "Key Questions." Within your breakout group, determine which heading each person's highlighted questions fall under: What's Right, What's Wrong, or What's Missing. Try to pare down questions to 1 or 2 under each heading that feel the most relevant or critical to solve.

BREAK

- c.** As a breakout group, add any additional questions to consider, and potential solutions or next steps to address items under "What's Right," "What's Wrong," and "What's Missing."
- d.** Review the potential options listed for each category and pare ideas down to 1 or 2 recommended next steps to share with the large group.

BREAK

4. Return to main group (45 mins)

- a.** In order of Culture, Leadership, and Ministry, spokesperson for each group to share their group's insights and ideas for "What's Right," "What's Wrong," and "What's Missing."
- b.** Discuss: Are there any key themes that emerge or consistent threads that run through your group's insights for the Alignment pillars?

5. Return to Culture, Leadership, and Ministry Breakout groups (60 mins)

- a.** Discuss Facilities questions and place responses under "What's Right," "What's Wrong," and "What's Missing" worksheet.
- b.** Prioritize your list according to immediate, short-term, and longer-term (e.g. in next two weeks, in next 2-4 months, in next 6-12 months), or according to gathering size (e.g. up to 10, up to 25, up to 50, up to 100, 250+).

BREAK

6. Return to main group (60 mins)

- a.** Breakout spokesperson from each group to report out on “What’s Right,” “What’s Wrong,” and “What’s Missing” for Facilities
- b.** Vote on top 3 items from “What’s Right,” “What’s Wrong,” and “What’s Missing” under each Alignment pillar—Culture, Leadership, Ministry, Facilities.
- c.** Brainstorm potential action items or next steps your leadership team can take on the top 3 items for “What’s Wrong” and “What’s Missing.”

7. Pare your list of next steps down to 5 or 6 action items and identify who will run point on each item.

8. Identify when your team will reconvene to report on status of action items and to determine next steps.

9. Closing prayer



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