



# Four Mistakes to Avoid in this Pandemic

## Serving Leaders in Ministry

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**Pastor:** As you are experiencing Corona fatigue, you can probably benefit from some practical encouragement. It doesn't take long to get caught in the ministry whirlwind as we play whack-a-mole with the church challenges we have never faced before. Here are four of the most common mistakes I have observed that you will want to avoid in the coming weeks.

### **Avoid Making Long-Term Plans**

Caregivers like us have a bias toward action—at least, we should. Sometimes, however, the wisest action is to wait for more information before you form a plan. The annoying fluidity of this pandemic deems it impossible to know what is coming next, much less when. Making reactionary long-term decisions based on limited information is panicking, not pastoring. Buckle up for at least a couple of months of this mess and stay as flexible as possible.

### **Avoid Ignoring the Various Authorities**

Listen to your elected officials, whether you are required to do so or not. The U.S. president has recommended that their citizens meet in groups no larger than ten, which is based on input from world-class professionals. Most of us did not go to medical school, so we should not feel pressured to become pandemic experts.



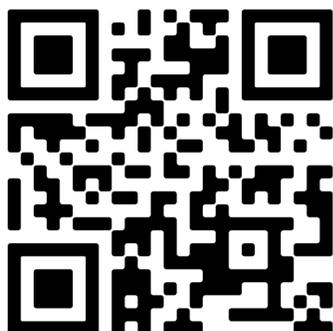
Many network leaders are encouraging pastors to ask, “Should we?” instead of “Must we?” Instead of just corralling church members into smaller worship services or home groups, it may also be important to creatively connect our people online until this pandemic passes. Facebook Live is a great place to start if you do not have recording equipment. Also, LifeWay Christian Resources is providing free online resources for families and groups to worship together.

### **Avoid Using Your Resources Randomly**

When frantic church members “blow up” our phones, and inboxes are flooded with ideas on how you should serve your community, we are tempted to overcommit. It’s tempting to say, “yes” too often. As a missionary to your community, you likely already know what needs your church is equipped to meet. If you are not sure, focus on your neediest neighbors. Give priority to caring for the older generation during this season. Likewise, if there is a high percentage of children who get their meals at school, work with your school district to identify and help those children and their families. Many networks, conventions, and associations are also curating resources on their websites for pastors and churches. Finally, remember: *Some of the tools that we are desperate to use today will be strategically helpful on the other side of this pandemic, like online giving and worship for the homebound.*

When you’re ready to serve your people: Share this sermon:

[Click here to access the Hope Is a Person sermon, or use the provided QR code.](#)



### **Avoid Ignoring Your Family or Personal Well-Being**

People will be pulling you in all directions for the next few months, so please remember that self-care is not selfish—it is strategic. Airline attendants always remind us to, “Secure your mask first before assisting others.” The best way to do this is to simply STOP, which is literally what “sabbath” means. I want to encourage you to take three–four mini-sabbaths a day to rest in the presence of God. Author Peter Scazzaro refers to this ancient discipline as “The Sacred Office.” There is no better time than now to take a moment to pause and pray. Enter your sacred office and reflect on this passage:

*“Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6–7 CSB).*

