



WAYS TO

STAY TOGETHER

WHEN YOU CAN'T

BE TOGETHER



SOLUTION GUIDE



There are a lot of reasons that people can't always be together in person.

Natural disasters, personal medical issues, weather-related events, transportation issues, and even global pandemics. And while some circumstances are more extreme than others, it's important for churches to know how to keep your community connected, when you can't connect in person.

Fortunately, there are a lot of new technologies and great ideas for your church to keep being the church, even when you can't be at church.

Here are a few ways that your church can thrive during the COVID-19 pandemic.





1 Encourage Together on Mobile

Just about everyone has a mobile device, and they are checking it constantly for updates, insights, and tidbits to guide their day. They might not even know just how much the communication they receive - for better or worse - impacts their thinking, decisions, and overall mood.

Consider sending individuals or groups messages with Scripture, quotes, or statistics that remind them of the goodness of God, His hand in all of our lives, and how a proper perspective can lead to good outcomes, regardless of the situation.

The Realm Connect app provides - among other things - a simple and powerful message feature so you can send messages, files, and images to groups or individuals. This is especially helpful when you need to send messages to people and segments in your church that you may not have on the top of your mind. Using the Connect app, you can create custom messages for various groups, or your entire church, to keep people encouraged and informed.

2 Worship Together with Livestream



Youtube, Instagram, Facebook, and other social media platforms have live-streaming capabilities that are not too difficult to learn and implement. What's harder is capturing good audio and quality video with good lighting. But don't let limitations in technology limit your worship. If you can't afford the best equipment, you can set the proper expectations. For instance, if your church is smaller, maybe put the camera closer and have a more intimate worship session. If you think it's a priority you should invest in, hire a consultant and make the most of it.

Whatever you do, don't stop worshipping together. People need to be reminded of who God is in times of turmoil, and nothing refocuses us and strengthens our faith like being "with" other people in worship services.

If you can't sufficiently capture the audio of your worship band, pare it down to an acoustic set. And if you just can't get the music to work, at the very least provide a message so your people can keep the rhythm of learning and inspiration.

One difficulty with live-streaming is getting everyone to watch it at the same time. One way to ensure everyone in your church has access to your messages and worship is to use Realm to message groups and the entire church, notifying them that you are about to, or have already had a service, and share the link to the video.



3 Pray Together in Online Groups

Prayer has probably always been the behind-the-scenes power-play winner in ministry. Small bands of individuals and groups fervently praising and petitioning God has undergirded the strength, health, and growth of the Church for centuries. And now, we can add even more potency to the power of prayer by giving people a platform to make prayer requests known and share praise reports.

Leverage mobile devices, texts, and social media platforms to give people an opportunity to ask for prayer.

Then have your prayer team or church members actually “pray out loud” by writing their prayers on the forum you’ve chosen. Then encourage people to respond with praise reports about how God is moving in their lives.

Consider creating a discussion group on Realm where you can group people together into segments that will be most effective in praying together. Then an admin can track all the prayer requests and monitor activity to facilitate a robust and vibrant online prayer life at your church!

4 Study Together Using Forums



People still need to learn. In fact, when people are sidelined due to extenuating circumstances, they are even more likely to find mind-occupying activities. Like online groups, forums give participants the ability to share resources, discuss them, and consume teachings.

A simple and powerful recipe for leveraging online forums is:

- **Post a video or written resource with a particular teaching.**
- **Discuss the materials, answering any questions your students or attendees have.**
- **Give an assignment to the students and attendees.**
- **Discuss the assignment answers.**
- **Assign next steps, activities, or follow-up learning.**

Essentially, you're simply adding structure to a group discussion so everyone can be intentional about learning together.

Realm Groups - and the Realm Shepherd app for leaders - allow participants to upload links and PDF resources. The ability to share resources is extremely useful - and almost indispensable - when learning in an online group setting. This feature - along with the ability to track conversations over time and manage group members - sets Realm apart from other solutions such as text or email.



5 Give Together with Online Donations

A lot of churches depend on in-person donations to sustain their monthly budgets. For those churches, times of disbursement in their population pose great difficulty and a great opportunity.

Now is the time to stress the importance of online giving. Not only does it fill the gap in times of absence but also it creates consistency with recurring giving, online pledges, and special funds.

It's important to communicate to your church, that now more than ever, the Body of Christ needs financial support to continue the operations of the church and to meet the special and unique needs of the community.

You might want to set up or promote an existing special relief fund (benevolence) or staff support fund to make sure that everyone's needs are met. You could also ask for people to set up recurring giving or make a pledge toward future initiatives that have been put on pause due to the extenuating circumstances.

Whatever you do, don't stop talking about, teaching on, and encouraging people about giving.

Realm offers best-in-class giving solutions that empower donors to give via text, on the Connect app, or on the web. Any option you need in giving is covered with Realm.

6 Serve Together in Crowdsourced Ways



In turbulent times people have unique needs. But when you can't get together, it's hard to assess needs and serve in meaningful ways. Fortunately, with modern communication, handouts and hand-ups don't only happen in a bread line or soup kitchen.

Ministries around the country are having people post needs on a common place - again, online groups, social media, and group texts - where others can see those needs and meet them one on one. It's all about mobilization.

For example, if you have a lot of people in your church who need toilet paper, but the one person in charge of sourcing help can't find it, maybe 10 other people ran across some here and there when they were out.

Instead of having a few people trying to meet all your community members' needs, why not have an army of many meeting the needs of people within and outside your church. This could be a great time to show your neighbors how your church mobilizes to express love in practical ways.

The Connect app from Realm helps people stay connected in the context of the church community while on the go so they can track needs in real-time. This gives people the option to check-in and see what people are looking for and get to it while they are out and about.



7 Grow Together by Staying on Track

One of the many benefits of being involved in a church is accountability. You're surrounded by people who help you gauge your spiritual growth and keep you on track as you grow deeper in your faith. But what about when you aren't surrounded by those people?

As with any discipline in life, it's easy to get lax in your spiritual growth when you don't have people around you to stay motivated. But there are ways to keep growing even when you can't physically go to church.

Your church should have an established pathway for people to travel when they become part of your church. A collection of resources, discussions, and experiences people can interact with to grow in their faith. When you have a step-by-step process to keep people growing, they're more likely to keep progressing.

Consider clearly defining what you want people to be involved with during a given period of time. It could be participation in any of the above. It could be an assignment, a video to watch, or a prayer to pray. Whatever you do, stay organized and communicate with people so they don't just wander while they're away.

Realm Pathways gives leaders the tools they need to create step-by-step processes that move people in a clearly defined direction. Pathways is the perfect tool for fostering accountability and encouraging growth, both in-person and - when needed - online.



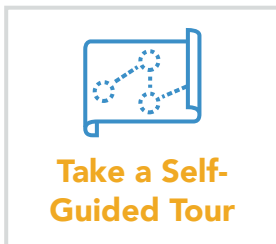
Love Together in Every Way Possible

Finally, whatever ideas you decide to implement, do it with a heart of love. Work hard to find ways to let your church know you are committed to staying connected. Encourage your leaders to encourage their teams. Share Scripture, let people know you're praying, be generous, keep seeking God, and above all else, spread the love.



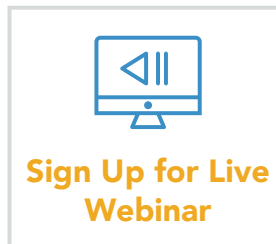
Realm provides solutions that will make your ministry and life easier. It is cutting-edge church management software that combines administration, accounting, and community into one system. It also connects your entire church and personalizes each person's involvement in your ministry.

We'd encourage you to explore all that Realm makes possible by taking a demo, walking through a self-guided tour, or speaking with an associate today!



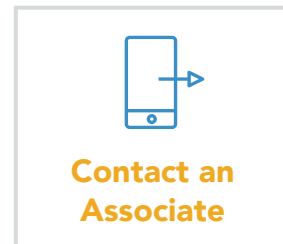
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