

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

How Churches Responded & Where We Go Next — Episode 141

A Look at Data from Our Survey of 500+ Churches

For the last several weeks, churches around the country have been in “response mode” to the crisis we’re facing. In an effort to learn more about those responses, we’ve surveyed more than 500 churches—ranging from under 100 in attendance to more than 20,000—between April 2 and 6. Generally, the data shows that larger churches were better prepared for this crisis than smaller churches. That’s probably not a surprise. However, it’s encouraging to see how quickly churches of all sizes have responded. In this episode, Tony and Amy dig into the data and what it can tell us about what’s next.

Weekend Service Engagement

1. Only 4% of churches are still holding in-person services at the church. Almost every other church has shifted to online services.
2. Only half of churches that were surveyed had online services before the crisis. The larger the church, the more likely they were to be offering online services.
3. Almost all churches are using online services in some format now. The number of small churches with online services has increased to over 90%.
4. More people appear to be engaging in online services than were attending services at church buildings. Two of every three churches indicated online engagement is higher than in-person attendance had been since the crisis began. Megachurches were more likely to indicate an increase in engagement.
5. Online engagement has more than doubled from before the crisis. For those churches that reported either increases or decreases in engagement, the average change was a 115% increase.

The question everyone seems to be asking is, “*What are the long-term ramifications of online church services?*” We need to start thinking of this as the new “front door.” And, we need to shift beyond thinking of online “attendance” as the win. We need strategies for connecting with online guests and for helping people take next steps toward Christ.

Finances

1. One of four churches may not have had adequate cash reserves set aside in preparation for a crisis like this. They either confirmed their cash reserves were not adequate or they were unsure. Close to 40% of small churches were not confident they had reserves to sustain through this crisis.
2. Almost all churches with more than 200 in attendance were offering online or mobile giving options before the crisis. Nearly 30% of small churches with less than 200 in attendance, however, did not have an online or mobile giving option. Three weeks into the crisis, half those small churches have added online or mobile giving options.
3. Giving has decreased in the majority of churches. Fifty-eight percent of churches indicated that giving has gone down since the start of this crisis. Megachurches with more than 2,000 in the attendance were more likely to report giving declines.
4. But, 12% of respondents indicated giving has increased. Churches that are *leading* with generosity—proactively looking for ways to pour into the community during this time—are the ones who have been seeing increases in giving.
5. Megachurches have been more proactive with staff furloughs or layoffs and reducing compensation. One in ten churches have already initiated layoffs and furloughs, but almost twice that many megachurches have started that process.

Groups and Resources

1. Four out of five churches have started to offer online small groups during this crisis.
2. Many churches are providing online resources and/or environments for children and their parents. That includes close to 70% of small churches.
3. Medium-sized churches and larger are much more likely to be providing online resources and/or environments for students during the crisis. Less than half of small churches are providing online options for students.

Next Steps

- **Get the survey data report!** Go to theunstuckgroup.com/coronavirus to download the PDF for free.
- **Churches have to be prepared for a new normal.** If you want to get out in front of that conversation at your church, [let's talk](#). We can help you map out a strategy for church after the coronavirus is behind us.

Listen to the episode on iTunes or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode141.