

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

# 7 Shifts Churches Need to Make Because of the Coronavirus - Episode 142

## *Start Asking the Right Questions Now*

Many pastors are asking us, “When do you think we’ll be able to reopen our churches?” But that’s the wrong question. The question we need to be asking is, “How must the church change for a new normal?” In this episode, Tony Morgan shares seven shifts he thinks pastors will need to begin leading now for their churches to thrive in the future.

### *The Shifts*

1. **Shift from analog to digital.**  
Digital is not going away after the virus is wiped out. Digital is here to stay. And, churches need to shift to making this a primary platform for everything they do rather than just a stream of their Sunday services. That likely means you also need to shift your staffing structure to align with this new reality.
2. **Shift from teaching to equipping.**  
Teaching is important, but just about every environment and program churches have offered in the past was designed to teach people using one-way communication rather than equipping people with the tools and resources they needed to engage the Bible, practice spiritual disciplines and live out God’s mission for their lives. We need to help people move from consuming teaching content to engaging a personal, spiritual journey to follow and become like Jesus.
3. **Shift from gathering to connecting.**  
Even before this crisis, people had less and less time to gather at the church. Churches were not winning by adding more and more events to their calendars. Even more so after this crisis, people will understand the need for friendship and community.
4. **Shift from global to local.**  
We can continue sending financial resources to help local churches and ministry organizations in other countries, but God has our churches in our communities to reach our mission fields.

5. **Shift from overspending to generosity.**

This is especially the case with staffing expenses. We knew even before this crisis that declining churches have 35% more paid staff than growing churches. With declines in giving, this crisis is going to force churches to reduce expenditures for staff and facilities which, in the long run, should help churches free up resources to partner with local agencies and churches to address spiritual, physical and mental health needs in their communities.

6. **Shift from complexity to simplicity.**

We're already hearing stories from churches that realized this crisis is making them simplify their ministry strategy. That's a good thing because we've known from previous research that keeping people busy in church activities doesn't help people become more like Jesus. Complexity is one of the most obvious signs that a church has begun to experience decline on the church life cycle.

7. **Shift from counting attendees (and now viewers) to engagement.**

Making disciples of Jesus is the win. We want to connect people with the body of Christ so that they have a chance to hear and respond to the Gospel. That means we need to quickly move beyond just counting how many people showed up online to engaging new "guests" and helping them take their next steps toward Christ.

These are the conversations we think churches need to be having beginning *today*—not when church reopens. It will be too easy to go back to doing church the way we've always done church, but if we do, we will have missed the opportunity of capitalizing on what God's teaching us during this interruption.

## Next Steps

- **Lead your team through a conversation.** Which of these shifts have you already started embracing, and which need to be on your radar but haven't been yet? Which shifts have you been approaching with a temporary mindset only? Can you forecast changes in how you staff or structure to align with how things need to change?
- **Coaching as you lead a church into the future.** No one is an expert in the future of how churches will operate, but we've been helping churches clarify vision, strategies, team structure and action plans for more than 10 years. We can help you assess your starting point (and do an honest reality check), make a plan to lead your church forward, structure your team to the strategy, and put the plan into action. [Let's talk.](#)

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