

CHURCH SHUT OR NEEDING TO SELF-ISOLATE?

YOU CAN BE CHURCH



Places of worship can be closed overnight by natural disasters, civil unrest, terrorist attacks, state decrees or negative social media campaigns. At present, local churches are being closed to slow the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and many are choosing to self-quarantine or isolate to protect themselves and others.

How will we respond? What will you do?

If going to church, catching up with friends, enjoying worship music and singing, praising God, listening to a sermon, and enjoying fellowship around a shared lunch has been your routine, the closing of your church or going into self-isolation for whatever reason will be a big loss.

Perhaps for you, going to church has been your weekly outing—to get out of the house, to see others. For many young adults, church has been a place to connect, to catch up with friends. It may have been your opportunity to escape and to find support, encouragement and warmth from fellow believers. Or, was it your opportunity to enjoy a safe, peaceful place—to experience God's embrace with some who understand? For many, a closed church is a disaster.

However, also think of the positives—and remember, the idea of going to a church building for a church service was not what happened in New Testament times. All the early churches met in homes—until the 4th Century after Jesus died, rose and ascended to heaven. Early believers did not go to a church building but were the church in their homes and communities. So, if your church shuts down this week or next, you can be Church. “For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.” Matthew 18:20

What might that look like?

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS FOR SABBATH SCHOOL

- Some may wish to simply sit and watch a Sabbath School program and/or worship service online.
- Others want something more interactive and focused.
- For your Sabbath School lesson download the 13 week Discovery Bible Reading Plan PDF. Find this on the home page of adventistchurch.com
- Watch the Sabbath School video for the week— just 3-4 minutes at vimeo.com/spddiscipleship

NEXT PAGE: TIPS & IDEAS

OPTIONS & IDEAS FOR WORSHIP AND BIBLE READING

Bible reading using *Discovery Bible Reading*.

Download a Discovery Bible Reading bookmark from www.following-jesus.com (multiple languages available).

Choose a Bible book to read over the coming weeks. Mark is a great place to start.

Read the Gospels, Acts and Paul's epistles using *Discovery Bible Reading*.

Gospels: *Desire of Ages* (White), *Messiah* (Thomas), *Following Jesus* (Roennfeldt), *Following Jesus* videos at disciplemaking.online

Acts: *Acts of the Apostles* (White), *Following the Spirit* (Roennfeldt), *Following the Spirit* videos at disciplemaking.online

New Testament epistles: *Acts of the Apostles* (White), *Following the Apostles' Vision* (Roennfeldt).

Use the *World Changer Booklet* to explore the teachings of Jesus and learn to live as His disciple.

Downloadable booklet and supporting videos available at disciple.org.au/resources/world-changers-bible-resources

Loving Your Neighbour During COVID-19 Season

Look out for the elderly and families quarantined by offering to shop, etc. See it as a time to also share your hope in Jesus. Visit disciple.org.au/blog

Livestream & Hope Channel

Some will enjoy viewing a live-streamed service from a local church or Hope Channel. Remember, interaction and self-discovery will be best.

Visit the AUC website for details on live-stream options.

adventist.org.au

BE THE CHURCH@HOME

With those isolated with you:

- 1. Meal.** Plan a simple breakfast, brunch or lunch together, but try to do something a little special. Eat outside or in an open space for social distancing.
- 2. Agape meal.** Plan to enjoy flat bread and grape juice to celebrate an agape meal each time you meet. (Acts 2:42-47)
- 3. Set times work best.** It could be 10 am, and plan how long it will be. Don't go on-and-on. You will meet next week again. Maybe sit outside in a garden—with space to protect all.

 Check out the guidelines for smaller gatherings at health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-organising-public-gatherings_0.pdf



4. Plan for an offering.

Encourage all to continue to return tithes and offerings to their churches through e-giving. (egiving.org.au or egiving.org.nz)

Also, collect an offering to support some vulnerable people who the group knows who may be finding things tough at the moment.

Check with a vulnerable person as to what is needed, purchase the item and let them know when you will leave it at their door—deliver and report to the group next week. (This giving can be focused and meeting direct immediate needs.)

5. Music. Great if you have some—but don't feel it is absolutely necessary.

6. Invite neighbours. But make sure the numbers are kept small, and there is appropriate social distancing, but many will be needing encouragement and support.

7. Outdoor activities. Plan to drive in separate cars—and meet in a forest, at a beach, beside a lake to walk and share—keeping distance.

8. Connect with others by social media. Use FaceTime or Zoom conferencing to connect your small Church@Home with others doing the same thing.

IDEAS FOR TEENS AND CHILDREN

The Tuis Resources

These resources have a family worship workbook, colouring-in pages, videos and activities that kids with parents can do together. Visit thetuis.tv

Families & Small Groups with Children

Families and Small Groups could also spend a Sabbath afternoon working on a Pathfinder honour or

Adventurer award. pathfinders.adventistchurch.com/resources/category/honours/ and adventurers.adventistconnect.org/adventurer-awards

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