

Checklist for Church Members Returning to In-Person Services

Below are a series of steps to consider taking on the actual day you return to an in-person church service. Think through and anticipate what it might look like to implement each step. Mentally visualizing and rehearsing what it might be like will help you be better prepared for safely reentering your church again. This isn't an exhaustive list but can help you plan for your (wise and joyful!) return to church.

| ✓ | Checklist for Church Members |
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| At Home | |
| | Pray for your church, leadership, and yourself. |
| | Check your phone, email, and church website and social media for important notifications and information before and after attending an in-person service. |
| | Review any recent church communications on reopening policies and procedures. |
| | Make sure you have a clean mask (and know how to properly wear it), and have sanitizer with you before leaving for an in-person church service. |
| | Wash your hands before leaving and after returning home from church (remember if your mask needs to be washed after wearing it to church). |
| Assess Your Health | |
| | Stay home if you are showing possible signs or symptoms of illness (e.g., fever), have recently been sick, or if others you are staying with are or were recently showing signs or symptoms. |
| | Stay home if you or others you are staying with may have recently been exposed to someone suspected or diagnosed with COVID-19. |
| | If you or others you are staying with start to show signs or symptoms of COVID-19 after attending an in-person church service, consult a healthcare professional and notify your church leadership. |
| In Church Parking Lot | |
| | Mentally prepare and ready yourself for social distancing. |
| | Remember you and others will likely be excited to be together again and that you will need to be intentional in order to observe safety actions. |
| | Put on your mask and check in the vehicle's mirror to make sure your mask is properly secured. |
| | Use hand sanitizer before exiting your vehicle and again after the service before you head home. |
| | Observe social distancing recommendations even while exiting and entering your vehicle, making sure to give space to others as they are exiting or entering their vehicles. |
| | Be sure to maintain recommended distancing with others as you walk through the parking lot or sidewalk to the church building and when returning to your vehicle. |

| In Church Entryway and Hallways | |
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| | Be alert to instructions from church leaders and volunteers providing guidance. |
| | Look and listen for COVID-19-related instructions and resources (e.g., announcements, posters). |
| | Don't break social distancing recommendations when entering or exiting doorways, waiting spaces (e.g., welcome center, lobby), or restrooms. |
| | Be sure to wash your hands if entering a restroom for at least 20 seconds with lathered soap. |
| | Remember to be patient and gracious with others. |
| In Worship Area | |
| | Follow the instructions, procedures, and policies your church is implementing (such as changes in seating arrangements, communion, choir, worship, etc.). |
| | Remember to stay at least six feet apart from others with whom you have not been staying, both during the service and when interacting. |
| | Remember that many healthcare professionals, scientists, and choir organizations consider singing and choirs a high risk activity. |
| | We encourage you to properly wear a mask not only to reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 but to also reduce the risk of spreading the virus. |
| | Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth, face, and mask (unless to adjust). |
| | Avoid "high touch" activities (e.g., greeting with a handshake, passing a collection plate from person to person). |

Resources to Guide and Support Along the Way

For a free church member guide on reopening, checklist, tip sheets, articles:

www.reopeningthechurch.com

To facilitate spiritual and emotional care from a biblical, research-based perspective visit:

www.spiritualfirstaidhub.com

For more on how to begin a master's degree in Humanitarian and Disaster Leadership or a Trauma Certificate at Wheaton College Graduate School: www.wheaton.edu/HDL

Disclaimer: The Humanitarian Disaster Institute recognizes that sanctioned religious activity varies from state to state. The suggestions provided in this checklist are not meant to serve as, nor is to be used as, legal, medical, or healthcare regulations. Rather the information provided in this checklist is meant to serve as a framework to help communities of faith consider some suggestions as they determine how they will independently choose to take action. HDI cannot guarantee the accuracy, timeliness, or completeness of information contained in this checklist because of how rapidly information is changing regarding what is known about COVID-19. Similarly, HDI cannot guarantee the accuracy, timeliness, or completeness of information contained in this checklist regarding protective measures because of how rapidly recommended best practice guidelines are changing. This checklist is not meant to replace federal, state, or local guidelines or recommendations on COVID-19.

About the Humanitarian Disaster Institute

The Humanitarian Disaster Institute was founded in 2011 at Wheaton College and is the country's first faith-based academic disaster research center. Our mission is to help the church prepare and care in a disaster-filled world. HDI carries out our mission through research, training, convening, and resourcing.

About HDI's M.A. Degree and Trauma Certificate

This M.A. in Humanitarian & Disaster Leadership at Wheaton College Graduate School can be completed in one year on campus or two years online (which includes a week of on-campus coursework at the beginning and end of the program). We have also partnered with the School of Psychology, Counseling, and Family Therapy at Wheaton College Graduate School to offer a new Trauma Certificate in a specialized track specifically tailored to humanitarian and disaster responders. Learn more at wheaton.edu/HDL.

Citation

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Sources

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Contact Us

Our website and social media accounts provide ongoing updates and resources for preparing your church for COVID-19. You can also find more information about Spiritual First Aid, including additional tools and related research.

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