

## Questions & Answers for NTCG local churches

### 1. When can NTCG local churches open?

- Although the Government states that places of worship can reopen from 4th July 2020, it is the responsibility of managers (pastors) to ensure that the church building can reopen safely for public worship, without risking the health of attendees.
- No local church is to open for public worship without the express permission in writing from National Office.

### 2. Why do churches have to have Risk Assessments?

- Many churches are also workplaces and so managers (pastors) must ensure that the building is safe for their employees/volunteers to work.
- No NTCG Churches should reopen unless managers (pastors) are able to demonstrate that they are able to meet the Government guidelines.

### 3. What happens to the Risk Assessments?

- All NTCG churches must submit their Risk Assessment documents to the National Office via the District Overseer.
- NTCG National Office will then authorise the local church to reopen based on an approved Risk Assessment.

### 4. Will entry to the church building be restricted?

- Managers (Pastors) should ensure that all users have access and can enter the church building safely. This means adhering to the social distancing guidelines and managing the entry and exit points.

### 5. How many people can there be in the building at any one time?

- All NTCG branches must adhere to the guidance regarding numbers and social distancing of 2 metres or 1 metre plus in mitigation.
- The number of people who can be seated in the congregation is not necessarily the same as the number who can safely enter and exit the building.

### 6. Will we have to change our service times?

- Managers (Pastors) should consider reducing the service time to minimise the amount of time spent in the Sanctuary, bearing in mind that the virus is more contagious indoors.
- For example, this may also mean holding multiple services with sufficient time in between to clean hard surfaces and prepare the building for the next service.
- It is advisable that services should not extend beyond 75 minutes so that no attendee is in the church building in excess of 90 minutes.

### 7. How do we make sure we don't have too many people in the sanctuary?

- Managers (Pastors) should do their best to ensure that the congregants are seated.
- Stewards/Ushers have a significant role to play in managing the movement of people, including entry, exit and seating.

## Questions & Answers for NTCG local churches

### **8. What if members don't feel comfortable about returning to church?**

- No one should be made to feel guilty about not wishing to return to the church building at this time.
- Managers (Pastors) should consider streaming services to avoid large gatherings and for the benefit of those who are self-isolating or shielding.
- Pastors should ensure that appropriate measures are put in place and communicated to give attendees confidence to attend their place of worship.

### **9. Can we still use our church hymnals and Bibles?**

- Managers (Pastors) should advise congregants not to touch or handle items in the Sanctuary and place notices where necessary to avoid this taking place.
- Managers (Pastors) should ensure that hymnals, Bibles and other shared materials be removed from use and single use alternatives be provided, such as photocopied sheets, which must be removed and disposed of by the worshipper.
- In circumstances where worshippers cannot bring their own books, managers (pastors) should ensure that where books are provided for worshippers they are quarantined for a period of 48 hours before they are reuse; for example, if you have multiple services in one day, a fresh set of books will need to be used for each of those services.

### **10. Can attendees still bring personal Bibles to church?**

- Attendees can bring their own Bibles but managers (pastors) should advise members not to leave their Bibles and other materials such as Sunday School manuals etc in the church building but take them home after each service.

### **11. Can we still administer Lord's Supper?**

- Managers (Pastors) should ensure that where consumables are used i.e. communion service, those serving and those receiving should wash their hands before and after or wear gloves.
- Managers (Pastors) should ensure that those serving consumables, release it in the hand of the recipient to avoid contact between the server and the receiver. In the event of accidental contact both parties should wash their hands immediately.
- Managers (Pastor) should ensure that consumables such as communion bread and wine are securely covered and that prior to the receptacle being opened hands must be washed or gloves worn. (More time will be needed in this area).
- An alternative is to use single-use emblems which can be disposed of afterwards.

### **12. What about Feet Washing?**

- Managers (Pastors) will need to suspend feet washing services until further notice.

### **13. Can we still provide food and drink at church?**

- Managers (Pastors) should discourage, as much as possible, the serving of food during this season. Where it is necessary, food should be prewrapped to prevent individuals from encountering food, dishes/cutlery other than their own.
- Hospitality spaces within a place of worship, such as cafes, are permitted to open but should be limited to table-service, social distancing should be observed, and with minimal staff and customer contact in line with hospitality guidelines.

## Questions & Answers for NTCG local churches

### 14. Can we still have Praise and Worship?

- This will be a challenging area for NTCG leaders however, managers (pastors) should do their best to avoid singing, shouting, raising voices and/or playing music at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult or that may encourage shouting as these activities carry the risk of transmission from aerosol and droplets.
- Managers (Pastors) should note that no wind instruments should be played during the worship services, devotions, or rehearsals. This applies even when face masks are used and social distancing followed. Other instruments can be used with due consideration to social distancing.
- Managers (Pastors) may use Worship Teams of approx. 5 singers in services or rehearsals. However, congregants are not permitted to sing. It is recommended that a plexi-glass be used to protect the worshippers from aerosol and droplets.
- Where music plays a big part in worship and recordings are available, we suggest you consider using these as an alternative to live singing. Managers (pastors) should ensure that you obtain the correct licences for music and songs that are not owned by the Church of God.
- Managers (Pastors) and other speakers will not be able to call for too many responses during the services.

### 15. Do we have to cancel our Baptisms?

- Yes, managers (pastors) will need to cancel baptismal services until further notice however, pastors should remember that members do not have to be baptised before they are taken into fellowship.

### 16. Is there still a limit on the number of attendees at Weddings and Funerals?

- Yes, managers (pastors) should note that no more than 30 mourners are allowed to attend weddings and funerals. It is not permitted to go beyond this limit.
- Face masks must be worn whilst in the building in accordance with the government guidelines.

### 17. How do we Worship in Giving?

- Managers (Pastors) should discourage cash donations, however where this is not possible, offering should be collected in a receptacle that is in a set place, in other words, offering plates should not be passed around.
- Consideration also needs to be given to how to limit the movement of congregants during this time.
- It may be an option to encourage congregants to collect an envelope on entering the Sanctuary and place their offering in a receptacle on the way out of the Sanctuary.
- Online giving should continue to be encouraged as a way of donating.

### 18. Can children come to church?

- Managers (pastors) should ensure that children are supervised by their parent or guardian and should constantly remind parents and children about the 20 second hand-washing rule.

*This is not an exhaustive list and it is important that it is read in conjunction with the official government guidelines.*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july>