

From 4 July, church buildings can reopen for gathered worship again, albeit with restrictions, and many have already reopened for individual prayer. Opening the Doors is about generating resources for churches as their buildings reopen to the public. The aim is to equip churches to engage people beyond their own congregations, recognising that many will have accessed worship online or may have reflected on big or spiritual questions during lockdown.

These resources are flexible and customisable to local context. Primarily they are invitational, providing a logo, posters, invitations, a video, largely delivered digitally but with the option of hard copy available through the [A Church Near You Resource Hub](#) and [The Church Print Hub](#). There are liturgical resources delivered by the Liturgical Commission, with some supplemental ideas generated by a team of pioneers and Fresh Expression practitioners. As with the guidance on reopening churches, the aim is not to put pressure on any priest or parish to reopen at a certain time but to provide help for when it is right to do – permissive not prescriptive.

How to use Opening the Doors

1. **Encourage** your congregation to reach out.

- Who do they know who has been accessing worship online who doesn't usually go to church?
- Which neighbours have they got to know during lockdown?
- Which vulnerable people in the community have local Christians supported?
- Who have they had spiritual conversations with?
- Who have they been praying for? These are the people to reach out to now.

2. **Create** your own invitations using [Opening the Doors](#) resources.

- If you can, customise by using a picture of your church building, with times and dates that worship will resume there, as well as times that the building is open for individual prayer.
- Create both digital and hard-copy invitations (or buy hard-copy via The Church Print Hub) together with posters for the notice board, local shops etc.
- Use the logo on everything you can.

3. **Invite** everyone you thought of in step 1.

- Remember that some people may come at the first opportunity, but many others will be initially nervous and may not come for some weeks or months.
- Make sure to invite anyone who has connected with your church during lockdown, e.g. through your church website, email, or Facebook page.

Welcome new people at every act of worship.

- It would be easy and natural to focus on those we know already, and those of our existing worshipping communities who are no longer there with us.
- Remember that for some new people, this may be the moment that they are seeking God, and they are trusting your church to help them in that search.

5. **Follow up** with new people, gently, giving people the freedom to respond or not as they choose.

- Ask them for contact details and drop them an email or a text message, telling them you were glad to see them and that they are welcome.
- Think about what you can offer, perhaps online, to help them think through questions about God.

6. **Keep online worship going** as much as you can.

- For thousands of non-churchgoers, online worship has been an opportunity to engage with church in their own homes without fear of not fitting in or being embarrassed or bored.
- Many people will still want that, either for a season or indefinitely. If you can sustain it going forward, do.

7. **Pray like mad**, that in all that is awful about this time, people would sense God's loving presence and be drawn into new relationship with God for themselves.

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- [Read our regularly updated Coronavirus guidance](#)
- [Visit the main Opening the Doors page](#) to access our resources

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