

## **SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS FOR CHURCH LEADERS IN CREATING CONTENT FOR THEIR MEMBERS AND FOLLOWERS.**

The corona virus (COVID-19) lockdown phase where churches and schools are closed, forced church leaders to find alternative ways to communicate with their members and followers. One way is to make use of digital technology and social media platforms. Below is a list of practical tips and guidelines for ministers and pastors who are recording, streaming and posting their content on digital platforms to inform their congregations.

1. Main objective:
  - 1.1. We must always remember that the purpose of the voice notes, video clips or live streaming you will create is to honour God, to give hope and spiritual guidance to your congregation in this Lockdown period, as the saying goes: “it’s not about me”.
  - 1.2. Share positive messages of hope and inspiration and guide your members to spiritual quiet time and self-reflection without any unkind statements or sharing facts that are not verified.
  - 1.3. Create content with the consumption of the media on mobile devices in mind. Not everyone has tablets or laptops.

2. The process to create the media:
  - 2.1. Select an appropriate venue with good lighting and acoustics. You can even do it in your garden or while sitting in a chair, there is no need for a formal setting. If you do the recording in the evening, first test your recording a few times to determine the best lighting position for your setting.
  - 2.2. People now work from home and wear informal clothes so you can do the same. Do not put on all the gowns or other formal wear you normally wear in the church which only fashions distance with the members of your church. We are now physical separated and creating more warm dring your message will help to consol and
  - 2.3. Prepare and plan what you are going to say. This will help you to shorten the message and prevent you from saying insensitive things when talking from the cuff. (Some write it on a cardboard or use a laptop with the script on it).
  - 2.4. **Data on the cellular networks are expensive for most South Africans without fiber Wi-Fi connections at home. Keep this in mind and keep your video clips short..** Less than 5-10 minutes is the best. Voice notes (Audio) will be smaller and might allow a longer message to be recorded without creating a massive file.
  - 2.5. Change the setting of your video device by lowering the resolution. This will create a smaller file and lower data costs for your congregation.
  - 2.6. When live streaming, take the same precautions e.g. time limits and prepare even better. You only have one chance and use the lowest file size setting of your camera.
  - 2.7. Start a Facebook page for your congregation if you don't have one and use it to distribute content and keeping everyone updated.

- 2.8. You can also use WhatsApp to do the same, but you will have to create multiple groups because there is a limit of 256 people in one group. Start with a Group for Surnames A to G then H to J etc or depending on the number of members create the groups or according to the different cell groups.
  - 2.9. Start compiling the names, contact details and email addresses of your local congregation (network) so that your message also reach them.
3. Create opportunities for the other church social groups for example Sunday school or women's league etc. try to accommodate them as well.
    - 3.1 Allow each group to appoint someone to take leadership and create content for their own members.
    - 3.2 Always take the final audience into account. Create even shorter messages and video clips for Sunday school children to keep their attention.
    - 3.3 Share Youtube videos of Bible stories or read for them from a Children's Bible.
    - 3.4 Your imagination is the only limit and the lockdown period is a opportunity for the church to embrace technology and use it for the greater good and to honor God.
4. This period will be remembered for generations to come. People will 50 or 100 years from now refer to it as the period of the great Corona virus.
    - 4.1 When you generate any media content state your name, name of the congregation and the date.
    - 4.2 Backup all this content e.g the voice notes, video clips or other documents created. It must become part of the

archives of your congregation, allowing the future generations to remember this period of our history.

5. Remember to still attempt to use traditional communications media for example church leaflets and sms to communicate with members that don't have access to smartphones or computers.

I hope you will find this document usefull. If you need any assistance please contact me at [johann@foresighttoday.com](mailto:johann@foresighttoday.com) or using whatsapp at 0829402750 and please send me your comments or other inputs to create an even more useful guide.

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Warm Regards,

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