

Locked down, but reaching out!



The worldwide spread of the Covid-19 virus changed all our lives, and for Christians how we 'do church' has had to change too. As lockdown in the UK continues, MATT LLOYD looks at eight ways we can adapt and find new ways to share our faith.

Dear Friends,

It's hard for us *not* being able to see each other; the reunion, when it comes, will be very sweet indeed! What stories we will be able to share of how the Lord kept us, grew us and used us.

I know we are all **still adjusting** to the challenges we are all facing. It takes some getting used to, doesn't it? In the midst of that, it's been great to hear stories of new opportunities to reach out with the good news of Jesus. God is still bringing people across our paths via phone calls and online; many are lost, many are "held in slavery by their fear of death" (Hebrews 2:15). What good news we have!

The apostle Paul knew what it was to be in **lockdown**. He said he was "bound with chains as a criminal. **But the word of God is not chained**" (2 Tim 2:9). May that be so in our towns and among our family and friends!

Here's a compilation of 8 ideas and opportunities to get the gospel out in these days. I don't want to overwhelm us. Maybe read one of these per day this week. Some of

us have less time but others have more; “making the most of every opportunity” (Eph 5:16) will look different for each one of us.

1. Pray.

Might this be the *main thing* the Lord is teaching us through this tough season of life? We are little children who depend on our Father. In prayer we look to Him to work. [Click here¹](#) for a great article on prayer.

Need stirring up in prayer? [Click here²](#) for a video.

Time to get a prayer list going for unbelievers and our nation? [www.sim.org³](http://www.sim.org) have a great list for our current crisis.

If we get *no further* than this first step in the time ahead, great!

2. Bible sharing via the Word One to One.

Many have been exploring the *Word One to One*, this guided read-through of John’s gospel, and seeing its value. We are all becoming technical wizards using things like ‘Zoom’.

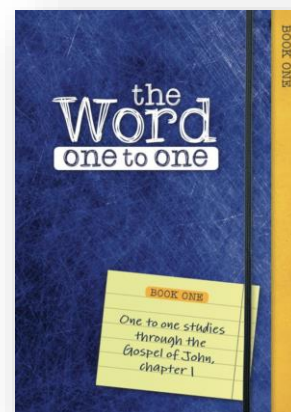
[Here’s a video⁴](#) of how to use the Word One to One online.

You could invite people you know like this:

“These are hard times which raise big questions...”

“I’m offering a 20-minute online Bible reading to my friends. We can catch up with each other too... would you like to try it out?”

I’ve asked that to a handful of people.



3. Stay in people’s lives

In these times of isolation let’s try to **stay in the lives** of unbelievers we know. That may be a long road to walk. Little and often seems a good approach; a text asking ‘how are you today?’ or a short phone call will go a long way with people.

It’s tempting to reach out to **lots of new people** that we can access via Zoom and WhatsApp etc. That may be good; surely God will use that. But there is a danger of overwhelm. Let’s be faithful to unbelievers **already** in our lives. It would be so easy to overlook them.

And let’s not neglect the local and the physical in these days of ‘online’, ‘virtual’ and ‘global’. Jesus said “love your neighbour” - some of us are finding new friendships with our *literal* neighbours. Praise God! Let’s invest. Clap for the NHS

with them; start 'Friday evening drinks' over the fence or on the street (at a good social distance!). Love is hard; love is practical. Keep going for the long term!

4. Conversations

Many of these aren't face-to-face but over the phone or online video.

- We still want to serve and ask questions. A really good question may be this: *'May I ask, do you have a faith/hope that helps you at a time like this...?'* (then ask more about what they say) *'Can I share the hope that I have as a Christian?'* (share a Bible verse?)
- A friend of ours was round before lockdown and had a great little conversation with our neighbour as their children played together. It went like this:

Friend: 'How are you finding all this?'

Neighbour: 'Tough etc (friend listened) ...how about you?'

Friend: 'Oh, there are lots of potential anxieties and fears. I know them. But I'm a Christian. It helps to know that God is in control. If I thought there was no God, it'd be really scary. But Jesus has beaten death and that really helps.'

Neighbour: 'That's interesting.'

The neighbour didn't give off that she was wanting to hear more so our friend wisely carried on serving the kids. But our neighbour heard the gospel!

Could we try and adapt something like that? Paul prayed in **Colossians 4:2-6** for **opportunities and boldness**.

5. Christianity Explored

Your friends can access the **CE material online** to watch for free [here](#)⁵. Or with a guided 'tutor' via the Billy Graham foundation [here](#)⁶.



Might some of us consider becoming one of those tutors? Some of us have more time; some of us have less. For those with more time, and bearing in mind what I said in point 3, might you consider being a **Christianity Explored 'tutor'**? All you need is the internet; the Holy Spirit will equip you for the rest. People around the world are logging in and need people to guide them through the videos. They email you a question if they have one as they go through. You think, pray and reply. Could you step out in faith?

To find out more [click here](#)⁷.

6. Life Explored

CE and LE are available on **YouTube** until the end of June. Perhaps you could share this 14-minute video⁸ with someone who showed some hunger?

7. YouTube

There's plenty out there to share. Subscribe to the Christ Church Bromley YouTube channel⁹ (or similar) to get videos as we seek to equip you with videos for our friends. **Perhaps you could encourage family and friends and neighbours to watch a service live via your church website?** Or forward it afterwards? Most live and published services are very aware that unbelievers may be watching. The 'threshold' to cross to come to church anonymously has shrunk massively in these days.

8. Literature

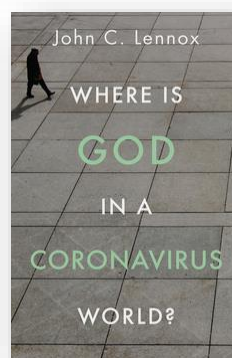
Putting a book in the post with a little handwritten note still seems socially acceptable these days; I reckon the personal, physical touch **would go a long way** in this online, virtual world. Some people will have time to read.

Here are some ideas of books written for unbelievers. Or send them a gospel! (available from the good book company¹⁰ or the 10ofthose.com¹¹)

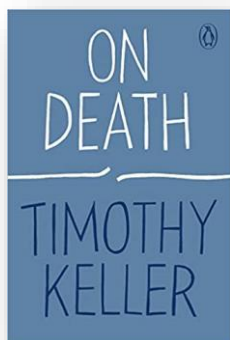
Here's a short tract;
Hope Beyond Coronavirus
from Roger Carswell.
Available here



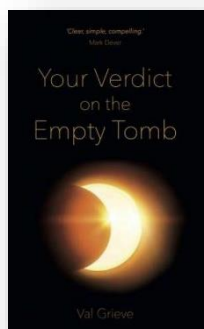
This looks good;
Where is God in a Coronavirus World?
from John Lennox
available here



This just out;
On Death by Tim Keller
Available here



Also, for evidence of the resurrection;
Your verdict on the empty tomb
by Val Grieve
Available here



**Adapted for Kent Gospel Partnership (April 2020) from an original letter by
Matt Lloyd (Associate Minister) and the team at
Christ Church Bromley**

Links:

- 1 [https://thinktheology.co.uk/blog/article/the corona virus experiment](https://thinktheology.co.uk/blog/article/the_corona_virus_experiment)
- 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnaxpQa1Xyk>
- 3 www.sim.org
- 4 <https://www.theword121.com/get-started>
- 5 <https://courses.biblemesh.com/all/christianity-explored-course>
- 6 <https://courses.goingfarther.net/christianity-explored>
- 7 <https://searchforjesus.net/join-the-search-for-jesus-team/>
- 8 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g65bHz40mWg&t=>
- 9 <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpYuX84bGeJJoG0V7KOggwA>
- 10 <https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/>
- 11 <https://www.10ofthose.com/uk/>