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**Dreams of a New Normal**

This is a project provoked by the current crisis of Covid-19 and the forced lockdown of church members and closure of church premises. For the last two months, we have had to improvise in terms of worship and fellowship and many have encountered the joys of social media for the first time. A great deal of effort has gone into maintaining contact and a semblance of church life, including Sunday morning worship.

Now that we are heading towards the easing of some restrictions with the possibility of opening of some church premises, there are major questions about what it is that we have learnt from this experience and how church life will be different when we return. It would be easy to forget those lessons in the rush to return to normality and so I have devised some simple tools that will help local churches and Circuits to capture some of this potentially creative thinking and dreaming.

This survey is intended for the members, ministers and supporters of a particular community or circuit to assist you to reflect on your church-life before and after the current lockdown. There is much talk of a 'new normal' emerging as a result of the current restrictions caused by Covid19. This is a useful way to capture some of the thoughts and feelings about what this will mean for your local church and/or Circuit.

There is no right answer and all responses will be collated and form the basis of a short report. No comments will be attributed to individuals and all responses will be treated in confidence. Please have a look at the introductory video at <https://youtu.be/W0kW-227s5A> .

When you have completed the questions, please return this booklet to:

Thank you and happy dreaming!

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[*http://new-connexions.org*](http://new-connexions.org)

*Please acknowledge origin when using this material*

**Life under lockdown**

*Please try to be as honest as you can - no comments will be publicly attributed to individuals. If you have nothing to say in answer to one of the questions, please feel free to say 'no comment' or leave blank.*

1.How would you describe ‘normal’ life before Covid19, particularly for your local church?

2. What do you miss most about church life during the lockdown?

3. What new spiritual practices - if any - have you developed during this period of lockdown?

4. How much do you expect church life to be different when the restrictions are lifted?

* Significantly
* A little
* A little, but only temporarily
* Not at all, business as usual

5. Do you have any concerns or worries about church-life in the future you would like to share?

**Dreaming - your local Church**

*This section allows you to think about your own congregation. If you work across a number of congregations, you may wish to reflect on life in one of them or indicate in your answer that you are thinking of more than one, or the Circuit as a whole.*

1. When this is all over, what are you hoping has been forgotten/lost? What would you like to stop doing or do less of in the future?

2. Which area(s) of church life do you think needs most change or development?

* Worship
* Premises
* Decision-making and leadership
* Growing in faith and discipleship
* Pastoral care
* Building external relationships
* Sharing faith
* Other: ……………….

4. In terms of the changes you would like to see, what do you think the rest of the congregation(s) would feel about them?

* Enthusiastic
* Willing
* Unsure
* Resistant or sceptical
* Opposed
* Other: ….

3. There is a lot in the Bible about the experience of exile and return, being forced out of life as they know it and spending a lot of time dreaming of a return. In this period of ‘exile’, what dreams do you have of the ‘new normal’ you would like to return to in your local church?

**Dreaming - the Circuit**

*The Circuit exists to support and coordinate local ministry and mission. If we expect changes to happen in our local Church, that will have an effect on the whole Circuit.*

What changes, if any, do you expect to see in the Circuit as a whole?

**Being the Change**

*Mahatma Gandhi called on his followers, 'Be the change you want to see in the world'. This section is designed to help you reflect on what actions are needed to see your dreams of the new normal become reality.*

1. Change often happens very slowly and is the result of many small intentional acts. First of all, think about times in the past when you have been part of a change in your church (this may include negative change, like the closure of a chapel). What particular actions did you take to bring that change about?

* I prayed and offered moral support to others who worked for change.
* I volunteered to be part of a group that implemented the change.
* I was one of those who initiated change and organised others.
* When change came, I was resistant and tried to stop it.
* I have no experience of change in my church.
* Other: …………………..

2. Now think about the 'new normal' and what small steps are needed to make it a reality. Reflect on your previous role in change and describe the role(s) you would now want to play.

3. What will be needed for the 'new normal' to work and are those resources currently available?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | available | not available | not sure | not required |
| Finances |  |  |  |  |
| Volunteers  |  |  |  |  |
| Small group to lead |  |  |  |  |
| Training  |  |  |  |  |
| Congregational Support  |  |  |  |  |
| Contacts with other groups  |  |  |  |  |
| Planning & Prayer  |  |  |  |  |
| Difficult decisions  |  |  |  |  |
| Other  |  |  |  |  |

**About you**

*This is not a customer survey or feedback form, but a tool for reflection. For that reason, it isn’t anonymous, although your individual comments will not be attributed to you directly.*

Your name: …………………………………………

Do you hold any offices in the Church or Circuit? If so, please list them:

……………………………………………………………………………

The Church where you are a member: …………………………….

Any other comments or observations you would like to share:

*When completed, please return to:*