



# COVID-19 and the Christian

Homegroup material week 4 - The ethical response of the Church

## SERIES OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

*The primary aim of the series is to unpack issues clouding our judgement and ability to discern an appropriate Christian response to the ongoing pandemic. Where necessary the series will refer to required facts and compare established facts against untruths in its attempt to give as much clarity as possible. However our aim isn't to give answers on controversial medical issues such as; is the vaccine good or bad? The series will rather focus on giving the required clarity for Christians to explore what it means to live ethically during the ongoing pandemic.*

## EPISODE 4 - The Ethical response of the Church

*In this episode we explore the ethical responsibility of the Church in response to the ongoing pandemic. We note the need to be sensitive to the diverse theological views and doctrines held by many around the Church and the pandemic and so the episode seeks not to pronounce a particular theological stance, instead to explore the prevalent theological positions, as a means towards discerning an ethical response. Some of the points of discussion:*

- 1. The Church adapting vs. the Church's resistance to adaptation to the new emerging world .i.e. Artificial Intelligence and seasonal ban on in person gatherings.*
- 2. How the church can understand healing in the context of the pandemic, especially considering the following scriptures in relation to this conversation: Acts 8: 14 - 19, 1 Tim 4:14, Luke 4:40 and Matthew 8: 1 - 4.*

3. *How the church can exist prophetically in a world of growing unemployment, declining trust in government institutes and growing fears over the end world theory.*
4. *Ethical stewardship over that which is entrusted to us and can make a difference in another person's life (focusing on the Church as the body of believers rather than an institution)*

This week's Hot Topics episode can be found here: <https://youtu.be/0R-IHKz5giQ>

## **QUESTIONS/ POINTS OF DISCUSSION FOR HOMEGROUP/ SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

1. *How should the Church (as an institution) respond vs. how should we respond as Christians or Church attenders? For example: The Church (as an institution) may need to take a specific stand on the seasonal closure of churches in order to ensure that it's prophetic nature remains clear, while the Church (as individual Christians belonging to churches and the Body of Christ) may be required to respond more practically or take specific measures within the pandemic in order to remain, for example, the 'hands and feet of Jesus' on earth. Discuss.*
2. *What does it mean for the Church to develop and put into place a pastoral response to the pandemic? What are some practical ideas/ implementations that could/ should be part of this pastoral response (responding from a place of caring)?*
3. *Throughout the pandemic, Churches have seen their buildings closed for worship and their congregation meet online/ through various other platforms/ not at all. Is this the ideal ethical response for Church's in the pandemic? If societies do gather, what does it mean to gather safely while taking into consideration the grave need for pastoral care throughout the pandemic?*
4. *How do you feel about the following statements:*
  - *Are not now more capable to host services and should the government not allow churches to return?*
  - *What is important to the faith community is to preserve life, protect life and to ensure that people have life in abundance (John 10:10)*

*How do these statements assist us in responding ethically/ inform our ethical response as the Church? How does our response as the Church impact the response of individuals to the pandemic?*

5. *Explore the difference between Church-centered-home-supported-spirituality and home-centered-Church-supported-spirituality. Which do you believe is a better/ more sustainable/ relevant approach? How does this integrate into our response as a Church to the pandemic and going forward? Consider additional factors such as: accessibility, inclusion, exclusion, care, the role of the church gathering in the Christian faith etc.*

## **SOME CONSIDERATIONS FOR GROUPS**

*The aim of the conversation is not to impose a particular truth onto the viewers, but to encourage and equip them on how to engage these topics, in such a way that produces ethical behaviour among Christians and especially Church attenders.*

## **RESOURCES/ CONTACT INFO TO SUPPORT DISCUSSION**

- *Pastoral response strategy for Churches by the South African Council of Churches:*  
<https://sacc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Pastoral-Care.pdf>

*If you would like more information, clarity or like to have a chat with the Hot Topics team, please do not hesitate to contact us at: [hottopics@gracepoint.co.za](mailto:hottopics@gracepoint.co.za)*