



To all Employees, Employees, Elderly and Elderly
from the Central Rhine Conference (*Mittelrhein*)

(Information to be shared, as much as possible,
to all church members)

03/19/2020

Suggestions for Meeting during the Suspension of Public Church Services

Dear brothers and friends of the Church,

Due to the spread of the coronavirus, all church activities are currently prohibited. In this context, we are receiving requests for alternative ideas to meet.

We are happy to respond to these requests, but we want to make it very clear that with these suggestions, **we are at no time advising to meet in small groups for the next few weeks.** If someone wishes, as an alternative to closed Churches, to hold private home meetings, such decision is entirely his responsibility. **The indications of the German authorities, which change almost daily, must be followed!** It is true that at the moment there is no prohibition to meet in private houses, however, both the federal government and the state governments of Hessen, Rheinland-Pfalz and Saarland ask to limit all social contact to the absolute minimum possible.

Actually, the present situation is **an opportunity to examine how we can keep our church alive outside of regular religious service.** The pandemic and its sudden effects show us how the possibility of public services can be restricted in a very short time.

There are different possibilities of attending an online service (for example, <http://www.hopechannel.de/tv/live>). However, in this model the encounter and interaction factors are absent and only the need to consume was satisfied in the first place. Therefore, the following suggestions are intended to share some ideas of how we can be active followers of Jesus also in these times of limitations. These ideas are not intended to be applied only to the brothers of our local Churches, but also to the people around us. Ask yourself what you can do for your neighbors, acquaintances, relatives, friends and especially for the older people around you, and this, without the need for direct contact with them. They may need your words of encouragement and practical help.



1. Maintain contact through telecommunications

This is the time to make effective use of the possibilities offered by the phone and social networks:

- **Telephone chains:** Call two or three people a week and encourage them to call others. In order for everyone to receive a call, church leaders or deacons can prepare a list of who called whom.
- **Prayers by phone or video call:** Pray spontaneously or come together to make prayer groups. The board and other church groups may also meet by phone or video conference to pray.
- **Calls by the reception of Sabbath:** form a group of several brothers and distribute among them all the members of the church in such a way that each member of the group calls four or six members of the church and wishes him a happy Sabbath, especially people who haven't been to church in a long time.
- **Study the Sabbath School lesson by phone or video call:** this can be done both on Saturday morning and at any other time. Just talk about the questions that come up on the topic being presented. You can also invite people around you who have an interest to participate.
- **"Whom can I share it?"** If a bible verse, a thought from your devotional moment, a book, or a sermon has become particularly important to you, ask yourself the question above. Then call the person or persons that come to mind and share that thought with them.

2. United through prayer and intercession

Group prayer unites, even if everyone prays for himself.

This sense of unity as a church can be strengthened by setting a specific time each day or a fixed period of time when everyone prays and intercedes. An experience of solidarity is created when there are reasons for prayer for which everyone prays.

People outside the church can also be explained that a group of Christians is praying especially for other people and they can be asked what requests they have to be able to pray for them.

3. Help your neighbors

Especially people who belong to a risk group may suffer particularly isolation and not dare to leave the house any more. Here we should watch over our own church brothers and sisters. But we can also be a blessing to the people



around us. Help can be offered, for example, through a notice or sheet that is distributed in mailboxes. The text could say (*in English below*):

„Liebe Nachbarn,

Sie sind über 65 oder haben ein geschwächtes Immunsystem? Dann sind wir, _____, gerne für Sie da und unterstützen Sie, damit Sie gesund bleiben. Wir gehören nicht zur Risikogruppe und können gerne für Sie einkaufen, Gassi gehen oder andere Wege erledigen. Auch für ein Pläuschchen vor dem Fenster oder Balkon sind wir gerne da. Sie möchten unsere Hilfe? Dann hinterlassen Sie eine Nachricht in unserem Briefkasten oder rufen uns an unter Tel. _____“

"Dear neighbor,

Are you over 65 or have a weakened immune system? So _____ would be happy to help you stay healthy. We are not part of the risk group and we will be happy to do the shopping for you, take the dog for a walk or do other things that you need. With pleasure we can also talk in front of the window or the balcony. Do you need our help? If so, leave a message in our mailbox or call us on the phone _____ "

Other opportunities to help may also arise in the area of child care at this time when parents and especially single mothers face challenges due to the closure of schools and daycare centers. Naturally, in these cases the possible risks of infection must be weighed.

4. The Mini Group

Two or three people can come together to encourage each other in their experience with Jesus. The current situation is a good opportunity to test it. This also works with the help of modern communication channels, without the need for direct contact. You can find more information and practical instructions in three short videos of Pastor Bernhard Bleil, director of the NDV / SDV Personal Ministry department (*in German*):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEp2aQm_En8&t=40s

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hIMRBnF-fc&t=26s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QE2rcWLjg4>

5. Training to lead Small Groups

The Adventist Church in Bavaria has published a brochure that teaches how to start a small group. The material is based on the formation of study groups:



two to eight people review all the material, exchange ideas and carry out the steps to follow for the implementation of a small group. Why not use the upcoming "free" Saturdays to meet as a study group? For this, one does not have to meet personally. The brochure can be purchased at the Bavarian Conference office (*Bayerische Vereinigung*) for a contribution of EUR 3 per issue. It can also be obtained free of charge in PDF format by writing to bayern@adventisten.de or andreas.pfeifer@adventisten.de.



If you have any more questions, as a team of the Conference, we will be happy to answer them. We consider giving you our help a high priority.

We hope to feel the presence of God in a very special way in these turbulent times.

With cordial greetings and wishes of blessing

Norbert Dorotik, President
Christian Badorrek, Vice Presidente
Markus Voß, Treasure
Alexander Zesdris, Youth's Department Director