

# In This Together



## 3 Ways Your Group Can Ruin the Return to “Normal”

Adapted from the blog written by Watermark Community Church in Dallas, Texas  
<https://www.watermark.org/blog/community-return>

**K E N S I N G T O N**  
C H U R C H



“One of the most challenging aspects of the #COVID19 recovery will be disagreements over acceptable post-COVID social norms between friends and family. Hurt feelings will abound if we’re not careful. **Extend lots of grace. Everyone is different.**”

– Charles Smith, *Vice President of Midwestern Seminary*

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After weeks of stay-at-home orders and restrictions on in-person gatherings, the question of exactly when and how to return to “normal” is the hot-button topic right now. On one hand, most everyone is getting tired of Zoom meetings and would prefer to have real meetings instead. (Need a laugh about Zoom meetings? Check the video [here](#).) On the other hand, it’s not like the Coronavirus has suddenly disappeared, and different people can have different comfort levels based on their own health situations and perceptions of risk.

Because of these differences, this season of return can be a minefield for your group. Opinions will vary. Emotions can run high. Accusations can be made. We must remember Peter’s reality check: *“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8)*. And one of our enemy’s oldest, most effective tricks is division. He will use disagreements, pride, and hurtful rhetoric to separate God’s people.

With that in mind, the follow page lists three traps your group can fall into as you seek to return to normalcy, and three biblical solutions to avoid them.

### **Pitfall #1: Fall in love with your own opinions.**

Opinions are like Spotify playlists. Everyone's got one, and we'd rather listen to our own, thank you very much. If we fall in love with our own opinions of what social norms should and shouldn't be, it will be difficult to love others who think differently. We all have unique circumstances, vulnerabilities, and preferences, and that's okay. Sometimes, the best next step is to encourage everyone involved to ask God for wisdom and then let them be free in their decision. *"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."* **(James 1:5)**

**Solution:** *"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."* **Philippians 2:3-4**

### **Pitfall #2: Expect everyone to read your mind.**

During this season, we all need to be assertive. Some may cringe at that word. But remember, assertive doesn't mean aggressive. It means being bold and clear, especially regarding your preferences. If you aren't comfortable showing up at an event or going somewhere or being close to others, you'll need to speak up and let your community group know. Communicate humbly, gently, and clearly—that's way better than expecting people to read your mind.

**Solution:** *"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."* **Colossians 4:6**

### **Pitfall #3: Look down on the opinions of others.**

Arrogance will destroy your group very quickly—especially when there might not be a right or wrong answer. If you believe someone is being overly cautious or grossly negligent, have a conversation *with* that person, not *about* that person. Looking down on others, gossiping behind their backs, and avoiding difficult conversations will erode trust fast. It's better to extend grace by finding points of agreement, believing the best about them, and trusting that the Holy Spirit is working in their heart.

**Solution:** *"So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves."* **Romans 14:22**

*"You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh, rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping*

*this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Galatians 5:13-14*

In light of the above, here are three questions to discuss with your group:

- Which of the three pitfalls do you believe you will struggle with the most?
- When you think about meeting together in person, does anything make you feel nervous, fearful, or uncomfortable?
- What are some practical ways as a group we can consider one another’s interests above our own?

In everything, strive to *“Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.” (Romans 12:10)* And *“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:2-3)* When you do that, you create the kind of “normal” that God calls us to in community.

#### **Scripture Referenced in this Document:**

Romans 12:10, 14:22

Galatians 5:13-14

Ephesians 4:2-3

Philippians 2:3-4

Colossians 4:6

James 1:5

1 Peter 5:8

*Click a reference to read the full chapter.*

