NC DISASTER READY CHURCH
INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS NC DISASTER READY CHURCH?

This is a strategic planning tool to aid churches to *prepare*, *connect* and *respond* in times of crisis or disaster in partnership with Baptists on Mission Disaster Relief.

The goals to assist churches:

- ? **PREPARE** for disasters by developing a plan for preparedness.
- ? **CONNECT** with the local community prior to a disaster or crisis.
- ? **PARTNER** with Baptists on Mission Disaster Relief in a larger response.
- ? **RESPOND** in the local community, and the state when disaster or crisis happens.

WHAT IS A DISASTER?

A disaster is defined as anything that causes human suffering or creates human needs that the survivors cannot alleviate themselves.

WHY NC DISASTER READY CHURCH?

Paul challenges Titus and the church *"To be ready for every good work." Titus 3:1*

NC DISASTER READY CHURCH will help your church plan to:

- ? respond to crises or disasters, large or small.
- ? involve your church family with training and roles.
- ? minister and evangelize during a crisis or disaster.
- ? be the light of Christ beyond the crisis or disaster
- ? identify real needs in the community.

PROCESS OF NC DISASTER READY CHURCH?

FOLLOWING 7 STEPS OF NC DISASTER READY CHURCH WILL HELP YOU:

- ? DEVELOP YOUR ROLES
  - TRAIN IN BAPTISTS ON MISSION DISASTER RELIEF
  - ASSEMBLE YOUR TEAM
  - IDENTIFY COMMUNITY LEADERS
- ? DETERMINE YOUR RESOURCES
  - IDENTIFY YOUR RESOURCES
  - UNDERSTAND NEEDS
- ? DEFINE YOUR RESPONSE
  - IMPLEMENT YOUR PLAN

PREPARE

STEP ONE: DETERMINE WHAT TYPE OF NC DISASTER READY CHURCH YOU WILL BE

- ? Based on your facility size and location.

STEP TWO: FORM A "GO" PLANNING TEAM

- ? Identify GO Planning Team Roles
- ? Engage the whole community (know your community)

STEP THREE: UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION

- ? Identify Opportunities

- ? Identify Threats and Hazards
- ? Assess Risks

Step Four: Determine the Goals and Objectives

- ? Identify Ministry Focus
- ? Determine Operation Priorities
- ? Set Goals and Objectives

Step Five: Plan and Development

- ? Develop and Analyze Course of Action
- ? Identify Resources
- ? Identify Information and Intelligence Needs

Step Six: Plan Preparation, Review and Approve

- ? Write the Plan
- ? Review the Plan
- ? Approve and Disseminate the Plan

Step Seven: Plan Implementation and Maintenance

- ? Training
- ? Exercise the Plan
- ? Review, Revise and Maintain the Plan

Step Eight: Communicate with Baptists on Mission Disaster Relief

- ? Complete this online form to communicate your readiness and response to BOM DR

STEP ONE: DETERMINE WHAT TYPE NC DISASTER READY CHURCH YOU WILL BE

- ? **Large Disaster Site**:
  - *Capacity to house 50+ volunteers*
  - *Large parking lot to stage mass feeding, recovery, shower/laundry, etc. equipment as DR volunteers serve the community.*
  - *Has county/city sewer and water access.*
- ? **Warming Center**:
  - *Back on the power grid quickly normally.*
  - *Generator powered to provide warmth during power outages.*
- ? **Charging center**:
  - *Provide space to charge battery type equipment; phones, tablets, laptops, medical equipment, etc.*
  - *If power is not restored then an adequate generator will be needed.*
- ? **Overnight Lodging**:
  - *Capacity to provide overnight lodging for DR teams traveling into our state to stage or on their way to a location from a request we have made of them.*
- ? **Local Emergency Operations Center**:
  - *Identified by the local city/county EOC's as a place their local authorities can gather in case a localized disaster is happening.*
  - *Best suited for this with a large parking lot access, easy access to highways, close to local fire, police, EMT, schools.*
- ? **Rapid Response Kitchen**:
  - *Large commercial kitchen and capacity to cook and serve and seat 300 daily.*
  - *Capacity to stock shelf stable food products to provide this number of meals for up to 3 days and be able to add to stock if needed for more than 3 days.*
- ? **Recovery Units**:
  - *Recovery Trailer(s) stocked with tools and equipment available to be used for state and national callouts when there is a disaster.*
- ? **Childcare**:
  - *Facility with nursery and other age appropriate classrooms available for trained childcare volunteers to use.*
  - *Located in close proximity to a disaster site where adults could drop their children off for care.*
- ? **Giving Church**:
  - *Provide financial support for Disaster Relief operations.*
- ? **Other ways**:
  - *Are there other ways your church can suggest to be a Disaster Ready Church?*
- ? **Any Combination of These**:
  - *Choose any combination of two or more of the above.*

ONCE THE CHURCH DETERMINES WHAT TYPE OF NC DISASTER READY CHURCH YOU WANT TO BECOME MOVE ON TO STEP TWO.

STEP TWO: FORM A "GO" TEAM

- ? Response Leader: _____
  Oversees the overall operation. Would serve as the team chairperson.
- ? Logistics Coordinator: _____
  Oversees facilities, needs, supplies, equipment, and support the work.
- ? Operations Planner: _____

Coordinates the volunteers and work assignments.

- ☐ Administrative Manager: _____
  Provides administrative, financial and data support.
- ☐ Donations Coordinator: _____
  Oversees and coordinates any in-kind donations and supplies.
- ☐ Evangelism Director: _____
  Will plan and focus on spiritual care during the response.
- ☐ Assessment Lead: _____
  Will assess the needs in the community and report back to the team.
- ☐ Other Volunteer: _____
  Additional volunteer team member if needed.

Engage and know your community so you will know who to call and be able to involve more people in the process of responding to the needs in the community when disaster strikes. *"Many hands make little work."*

DEFINITIONS

Response Leader:

- ➢ Point person and oversees the planning, coordination, and oversight of the response. Think "Chairperson." Most of their work will take place in preparing for a crisis or disaster.

Assessment Lead:

- ➢ Serves in the community as "boots on the ground" identifying the needs and assessing how the **NC Disaster Ready Church** can respond and assist those affected by the disaster.

Logistics Coordinator:

- ➢ Serves to support the operation as they oversee any facilities, supplies, equipment, repairs, and support of the operation. Asks the question, "What is needed to support the work of the volunteers?"

Operations Planner:

- ➢ Coordinates the volunteers and the work projects. Asks the question, "What work is needed and what volunteers can I assign to the project?" Works closely with the Assessment Lead and keeps the Response Leader informed.

Administrative Manager:

- ➢ Provides administrative assistance to the team and operation.
- ➢ Keeps track of expenditures and receipts, data entry and tracking, and basic secretarial duties.
- ➢ Manage phone calls and forward as needed.

Donations Coordinator:

- ➢ Oversee and organize all in-kind donations and distribution. Particularly in a larger disaster, donations need to be managed efficiently, effectively, and orderly.

Evangelism/Spiritual Care Director:

- ➢ Serves to keep the spiritual focus on our mission.
- ➢ Asks the questions, "How can we share the Gospel through this response to our community?" "How can we care for those affected by this crisis or disaster?"
- ➢ Oversee the spiritual care and encouragement of all volunteers.

Keep in mind that all positions (other than Response Leader) will need additional volunteers to assist during the response. Keep also in mind that there may not need to be all these rolls covered depending on your choice of disaster ready church. You are free to manage these tasks as you see best fits your church and situation. This is only a guide.

STEP THREE: UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION

? IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES:

Disasters are difficult and tragic, but opportunities for ministry exist in them.
Identify opportunities amid difficulty: *(Romans 8:28)*
Consider skilled volunteers, facilities, equipment, finances, resources, etc.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

? IDENTIFY THREATS AND HAZARDS:

Disasters also bring their own threats and hazards. Keeping your team, church, and community safe is a priority. Identify known and potential threats and hazards to the response and make it known. Consider weather conditions, road conditions, utility hazards, abilities of volunteers, improper equipment, lack of knowledge/training, etc.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

? ASSESS THE RISKS:

Disaster response brings its own risks.

- Do not exceed your training / ability.
- Is the outcome worth the investment?
- Are there safety issues to consider and/or address?
- Are there continued or potential threats in the community?

STEP FOUR: DETERMINE GOALS / OBJECTIVES

? DETERMINE OPERATION PRIORITIES:

Operational priorities specify what the **NC DISASTER READY CHURCH** is to accomplish to achieve a desired end-state for the operation. Involve the pastor to help establish the priorities and direction that would also seek to fulfill the overall vision for the church.

- Envision a mock disaster and think it through. This scenario should be as realistic as possible. Consider multiple scenarios in the planning process.
- Imagine the incident's development from prevention and protection efforts.
- Consider initial warnings and concerns of the impact to the church and community.
- Think through possible consequences, damage, and destruction due to the incident.
- Determine the church's operation priorities and what it can do to help those affected by the crisis.
- Be careful not to try to be *"all things to all people."* That is the value of partnering with other organizations in a disaster/crisis response. Each one does what they do well, and it works well.

? SET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Goals and objectives need to be carefully considered so that they not only meet the needs of the affected community, but also fulfill the mission and vision of the church. Churches do not need "something else to do," but do need a plan and purpose of why they are doing it.

- Consider the church's mission and vision plan.

- Consider the church's resources and abilities.
- Consider the church's scriptural mandate of the Great Commission.
- Consider the church's responsibility of equipping the saints to the work of ministry.

This will be an ever-evolving area of the process and contingent upon the specific crisis.

STEP FIVE: PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT

- **DEVELOP AND ANALYZE COURSE OF ACTION:**

  This step is a process of generating, comparing, and selecting possible solutions and ministry plans for achieving the goals and objectives identified in Step 4. As you think through a possible scenario there are several things to determine:
  - How quickly can we respond?
  - Who do we contact/call?
  - Identify and outline decision points.
  - Identify and outline operational tasks.
  - Determine course of action.

- **IDENTIFY RESOURCES:**

  Once the course of action is determined, resources will be needed.
  - Finances. What financial help is available through your church, local association, state convention or other community and non-profit partners?
  - Equipment. What equipment is needed and/or available?
  - Personnel. Are there skilled volunteers available and what skills? Are there unskilled volunteers and what role is needed? Match a specific need(s) to a specific volunteer(s).
  - Supplies. What donated supplies are available and how can they be distributed?
  - Caution. There is a caution regarding a "help that hurts." Well-meaning people want to help but can offer things that are not helpful.
    - Used clothing/shoes/stuffed animals.
    - Large amounts of Bottled water (often provided by the Red Cross in large quantities).

- **IDENTIFY INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE NEEDS:**
  - Identify progress made toward the goal and celebrate victories.
  - Identify "single point failures" and adjust as needed.
  - Check for omissions or gaps. Unmet needs.
  - Check for inconsistencies in organizational relationships.
  - Stay focused on the goal and adjust as needed. Remember to be flexible.

STEP SIX: PLAN, PREPARATION, REVIEW, APPROVE

This step turns the results of the course of action development into an Emergency Operational Plan. Start with a rough draft and adjust as needed. Too much detail can bottleneck the process; too little detail can confuse direction.

- **WRITE THE PLAN:**

  Step 4 gives the overall rough draft of the basic plan. This step streamlines the plan.
  The rough draft is shared with the church staff and key leaders for their input, suggestions, and buy-in.
  Keep these simple rules in mind when writing the plan:
  - Keep the language simple and clear.
  - Avoid using jargon and minimize the use of acronyms.
  - Provide enough information to communicate an actionable plan, but not so much detail that does not allow for flexibility.

- Format the plan into a document that is easily read, and contents can be found quickly and efficiently.
- Have the plan readily accessible for an emergency situation.

☐ **Review the Plan:**

The team should periodically review the plan as things will often change.
Consider:

- Adequacy
- Feasibility
- Acceptability
- Completeness
- Compliance

Keep in mind, some resources needed may not present themselves until the crisis comes.

☐ **Approve and Publicize the Plan:**

Present the plan to the appropriate church leaders and gain proper approval.

STEP SEVEN: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION & MAINTENANCE

☐ **Training:**

What good is a plan if it is not communicated and taught?

Sharing and training should take place for all personnel involved so they have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to work toward the same goal.

Church staff and key leaders are critical individuals to have well-informed and educated of the plan. In a crisis, the people will often look to them for direction, guidance, and comfort.

☐ **Exercise the Plan :**

After communicating the plan to church staff/leaders, talk through a practical potential scenario for your church / community. Walk them through the plan and gain valuable feedback from them to identify strengths, weaknesses, flaws, and possible pitfalls.

The Planning Team should reconvene to discuss any problems and consider remedies for any issues. Communicate those changes to staff / church leaders.
Just as schools and some businesses have fire / storm drills, the same can happen in a church setting. Determine how and when this can happen.

☐ **Review, Revise and Maintain the Plan:**

A continual reevaluation, review, and revision of the plan will help maintain the effectiveness of the plan. Planning is a continuous process that is not completed when the plan is published. Plans evolve as lessons are learned, new information and insights are obtained, and priorities are updated.

Changes in church facilities and organization can dictate a change or revision to the plan. The Planning Team should review the plan at least every 6 months. A review and update should also occur after any incident, response, changes of resources or operational standards, various risks, insurance requirements, or local ordinances.

Step Eight: Communicate with Baptists on Mission Disaster Relief

Complete this online form to communicate what type(s) of Disaster Ready Church you choose. This will help us partner together when any type of large or small disaster strikes our local community, state or nation.

CONNECT

To maximize your effectiveness to your community, preparation is a must but also the connections in the community are critical. Those connections need to be made long before any disaster or tragedy happens in your community. Building healthy and strong relationships make for a much smoother and effective response. Connect with your community leaders and be ready to work well together. Be an active part of Baptists on Mission Disaster Relief, any Community Organization Active in Disaster (COAD), or Volunteer Organization Active in Disaster (VOAD).

Local Emergency Manager:	
Phone #:	***Email:***

Police Chief or Sheriff:	
Phone #:	***Email:***

Fire Chief:	
Phone #:	***Email:***

School Superintendent:	
Phone #:	***Email:***

Local Red Cross Contact:	
Phone #:	***Email:***

Local Salvation Army Contact:	
Phone #:	***Email:***

Associational Missionary Strategist (AMS):	
Phone #:	***Email:***

Baptists on Mission Disaster Relief Director: Tom Beam	
Phone #: (919)459-5605/(919)208-0478	***Email: tbeam@ncbaptist.org***

Local Food Bank:	
Phone #:	***Email:***

Local Health Department:	
Phone #:	***Email:***

Other:	
Phone #:	***Email:***

RESPOND

SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Once a crisis or disaster strikes, it is time to respond. Your planning, preparation and hard work is now ready to be put into action. Remember to always be sensitive and flexible.

Disasters are always about loss: food, water, home, income, material possessions, photos, keepsakes, loved ones, and more. Caring for immediate needs comes first.

Keep in mind there are various kinds of survivors:

- **Direct Survivors** – People directly impacted by disaster.
- **Indirect Survivors** – Friends and family related to the disaster.
- **Hidden Survivors** – Those who are assisting victims.

Keep in mind that people will react differently:

- **Physical Response** – shock, numbness, disorientation, fight, or flight, heightened sensory perception, etc.
- **Emotional Response** – shock, denial, disbelief, anger, fear, frustration, confusion, guilt, grief, overwhelmed

- [?] **ACTIVATE your team and volunteers.**

Depending on the type, scope, and severity of the crisis or disaster will determine who you call. Know WHO to call on your contact list to gather information, identify the needs, and begin to implement your plan. ***It is imperative to establish relationships long before any disaster or crisis occurs.***

Partnerships are important to have in place so services are not duplicated by various groups. This also allows you to know what services are available.

- [?] **THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO CRISIS AND DISASTER**

We live in a world where it seems that crises and disasters are happening more often. These events happen in our communities and in our homes. Depending on the severity of the crisis or disaster, will also depend on the need for and level of emotional and spiritual care.

Research has consistently shown that the more personal exposure a survivor has to the disaster's impact, the greater his or her post-disaster reactions. Always be attentive and sensitive to this. You do not want to create a crisis within a crisis.

Some of these reactions will be temporary and short-lived. That is part of the process. Others may get caught in an emotional crisis which makes it difficult if not impossible to move forward. Know your limitations and know when it is time to refer to a qualified person.

What can a church do to assist those who have experienced a crisis or disaster?

- [?] **Observe their behavior**. Are there indicators of PTSD or other issues that require help?
- [?] **Be there**. Sometimes your silent presence is all that is needed.
- [?] **Empathize with them in their pain and suffering**. You cannot make it go away, but you can share with them in their pain. Everyone needs support. Let them know they are having a natural reaction to an unnatural event.

- **Listen, listen, listen**. Even if we have good advice, great wisdom or know what they need, sometimes all they need is for someone to just be there.
- **Help them with what you can help them with**. You are not all things to them but offer only what you can do to meet their need.
- **Cry with them or laugh with them**. Emotions can be all over the place and that's okay.
- **Allow them to grieve**. Grief is not an event, but a process and takes time. Allow that time to happen.
- **Appropriate hugs and physical touch**. Sometimes a shoulder to cry on or a hug is what is needed which can bring healing and comfort.
- **Pray with them**. Ask if you can pray, but keep the prayer personal, focused and brief.
- **Crisis is not the time for a theology lesson**. They will want to know why and want answers. Sometimes there just are no answers. But they need to know you care.

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea." (Psalm 46:1-2)

- **EVANGELISM DURING CRISIS OR DISASTER**

"But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." Lam. 3:21-23.

During a crisis or disaster, most people are often searching for answers to why this would happen to them. Those questions may come in different forms, but they are there nonetheless. A person of faith will look at it much differently than someone without faith in God. And those who are anti-religious may even be angry and blame God.

Either way, the questions are still there, and this opens the door for evangelism. Studies show that people are more open to life-changing truth during times of disaster, crisis, life-change, or extreme stress than any other time.

Often the question is "If God is a God of mercy and love, and if He is faithful, how could He let this happen?" That can open the door for them to hear the truth of the Gospel.

Below are some considerations when sharing the Gospel during times of crisis:

- **LISTEN** to their story. They need to tell their story. And this is not your story.
- **LOVE** them by listening to them and demonstrating genuine concern.
- **ASK** if there are any immediate needs they may have you can meet.
- Be **CAUTIOUS** in making any promises. Always better to under promise and over deliver.
- **REALIZE** that people react to disasters in various ways. Do not correct or scold them for how they react or feel. What they feel IS what they are feeling.
- **AVOID** using manipulative words or actions. Choose your words carefully and be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- Be **PREPARED** to share your faith story. Your personal faith story is the most powerful testimony you have. But keep it brief.

- ☐ **SHARE** with them how Christ came to provide salvation for them if they will repent of their sin, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Savior and Lord.
- ☐ Be **CAREFUL** not to use this time of crisis to manipulate someone into a decision.
- ☐ **ALLOW** time for questions, conversations, and connection to a local church or pastor.
- ☐ **PRAY** with them. Always ask permission and seldom you will be denied that opportunity. Some may even be surprised that someone would pray for them. Use their name in your prayer. It is amazing how many people have never heard their name used in a prayer.

A **NC DISASTER READY CHURCH** can assist with mitigation, preparation, warning, rescue, and evacuation. It can also provide facilities, volunteers, and supplies to assist with emergency feeding, shelter, childcare, or other functions. Church facilities can be used as an information center for disaster survivors and provide pastoral counseling or crisis intervention.

Other ministry opportunities for churches:

- Identify volunteers (in the church or in the community) who can give advice regarding insurance, repair contracts, and applications for loans or grants.
- Identify members who can provide temporary housing for disaster survivors.
- Identify multilingual interpreters to assist when needed.
- Provide companionship to displaced people and are unfamiliar with their new surroundings, community services, and stores.
- Participate in ministries such as receiving, sorting, and distributing clothing, bedding, bulk food, clean-up, and household supplies.
- Provide assistance with food, housing, communication, and other needs of out-of-town volunteers who come to help with the disaster response.
- Cooperate with other agencies during disasters.
- Train in Baptists on Mission Disaster Relief to be called out when disaster strikes: Disaster Relief

FINAL THOUGHTS

- ☐ **JUST A FEW FINAL THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER**
  - ☐ **THE DO'S**
    - Pray. Enlist a prayer team. Senior adult groups are great for this.
    - Determine what your church can do well and strive for excellence.
    - Look for unmet needs in your community and see if you can meet them.
    - Respect and follow community and government directives
    - Provide gift cards to affected families. This can involve all your church members.
    - Train in Baptists on Mission Disaster Relief and partner together.
    - Build a relationship with your local Red Cross and Emergency Management.
  - ☐ **THE DO NOT'S**
    - Do not try to be all things to all people. It's impossible.
    - Do not offer what you want but what they need.
    - Do not promise things you cannot deliver.
- ☐ **IS YOUR CHURCH PREPARED?**
  - ☐ Does your church have a disaster plan?
  - ☐ Does your church have a tornado plan?
  - ☐ Does your church have a fire plan?
  - ☐ Does your church have an earthquake plan?
  - ☐ Does your church have a plan if your meeting space becomes temporarily unusable?