

What's in your bag?

Congregations have the tools to thrive as stewards of God's mission

People who prepare for disaster almost always have a "Go Kit," a backpack filled with the equipment they will need in the event a natural or other disaster strikes. However, not all "Go Kits" are created equal.

Those in the "survivalist" community put things in their "go kit" to help them "bug out," that is, to get away from the disaster area. They often carry food, water, personal hygiene supplies, money, their own medication, and often tools for self defense. They want to have with them all they need to survive whatever calamity comes.

"Stewardship means being faithful stewards of not just the resources to do mission, but stewards of the mission itself."

People in the "disaster response" community also have "go kits," but they stock theirs with the materials they will need to go into the disaster area for the purpose of helping those in need. As a member of the Bremer County Community Emergency Response Team, the "go kit" I was issued includes an advance first aid kit, work gloves, medical gloves, small crow bar, flashlights, safety vest, hard hat, and communication tools. These are the tools needed when the primary mission isn't to survive, but to rescue.

What kind of "go kit" would your congregation have? In other words, what is the mission of your congregation? Is it one to run away from mission and make sure the congregation survives, or is it to boldly charge forward to do as much good as possible?

In these days of a rapidly declining population in our rural communities, congregations may be tempted to think we are on the cusp of a disaster. So should our mission be one of "survival?" I feel that this is a huge mistake because



people cannot get excited about, or feel good about, contributing time or money to a congregation that exists only to survive a little longer. On the other hand, people are inspired by congregations whose mission is to rescue — to rescue the hungry, the lost, the misfits, the lonely, the unforgiven, the very young, the very old, and especially those who do not yet know the love of God in Christ.



Congregations who seek out the disasters in our world, community, or families, and who boldly go in with their supplies — tools to communicate among those in conflict, lights to show the way of peace, work gloves because they are not afraid to get their hands dirty, and the healing balm of grace — are the congregations that not only survive, but survive with a purpose.

Stewardship means being faithful stewards of not just the resources to do mission, but stewards of the mission itself.

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