



# BEAT THE RUSH

Leon Evans, Lead Pastor Lifecentral Church, UK – June 2020

The phrase 'beat the rush' means 'get there first'.

When we think of the word rush, we think of adrenaline, exhilaration, the feeling you get on a roller coaster, or when you are on a jet ski or when during lockdown you get the chance to put the bins out or do the big shop!

As a leader we are no stranger to the feeling of the rush...it's similar to what my friend Duncan Clark calls the "leadership buzz" in his excellent blog:

<https://pastorduncanclark.com/2020/05/09/leadership-buzz/>

I recognise this feeling all too well, the first few weeks of lockdown the rush was to get there as quick as we could, connect with the people, communicate what we are doing, we adapted, we pivoted and everything went online. The first few weeks were a ride, a roller coaster...a rush...

Then things calmed down (a bit) and we attempted to embrace a "new normal" but there is another rush coming and it is what I call THE RUSH BACK...

Before I attempt to articulate that, I want to appeal to leaders especially the ones like me, the adrenaline fuelled, rush focused leaders who actually thrive in times of crisis. I want to say this, there is more at stake than you realise... Not just your own health and well-being but the future of the church... my challenge is this...

**BEAT THE RUSH.**

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**LIFECENTRAL  
CHURCH**

## The rush back to busyness

We've discovered some treasures in the cave of lockdown haven't we?

- Some new rhythms...time to pray, think, reflect, even spend less money!!
- Some new experiences... who knew that there were some amazing walks on the doorstep of the house I've lived in for over 15 years?
- Some new relationships, I actually know my neighbours so much better now and that feels good.

Let's not rush back to busyness... but there's another rush for us as leaders...



## The rush back to our buildings

At Lifecentral Church we are refusing to use the word REOPEN. Why? Because the church was never closed! We have never been as open as we have been these past months...we won't use the word REOPEN we will use the word REGATHER.

Will we regather? **Yes**

Should we regather? **Absolutely**

Will we regather as soon as we are allowed?

**Not so sure about that... why?**



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*... we are refusing to use the word REOPEN. Why? Because the church was never closed!*

# **There are 4 key markers for us:**

**Safety** - we have all read the horror stories of churches that opened when they could, they rushed back and they suffered as a result but more importantly, people suffered!

## **Just because we can doesn't mean we should**

**Quality** - is the quality of the worship experience better than online? If not, I'm not so sure we should rush back? After all Jesus is building his church without us being back in the building!

We had a message from a lady who said this... "I've been watching your services online; you've given me a row behind the back row... I hope in time I can move a few rows forward"

We've had people indicate a decision to follow Jesus almost every week since we've been online, we're about to start our second online Alpha and have started virtual connect groups.

## **Online church has given me a row behind the back row**

**Capacity** - the energy, effort, thinking, planning and resources it will take to regather is immense and yes we will at some point and it will be so good....but only if we...BEAT THE RUSH!.

**Legacy** - what do we want to be known FOR?

- Too often the church is known for what she's against I want the church to be known for what she's FOR.
- We are FOR people so we will not put them at unnecessary risk
- We are FOR quality worship experiences that honour God and inspire people
- We are FOR our amazing staff and volunteers and so we do not want to burn them out
- We are FOR the long-term mission of the church over the short-term rush of getting back into our buildings.

At a recent staff meeting, one of our team shared how her neighbour needed a prescription and her GP recommended she tried Lifecentral church because of what we were doing in the community!

We have had local councillors, business leaders, care home managers, senior staff in the NHS all comment how the church has stood with them and supported them during this crisis. Because when you are FOR people, that's what will make the biggest impact and lasting legacy, not how quick you can rush back into your buildings.

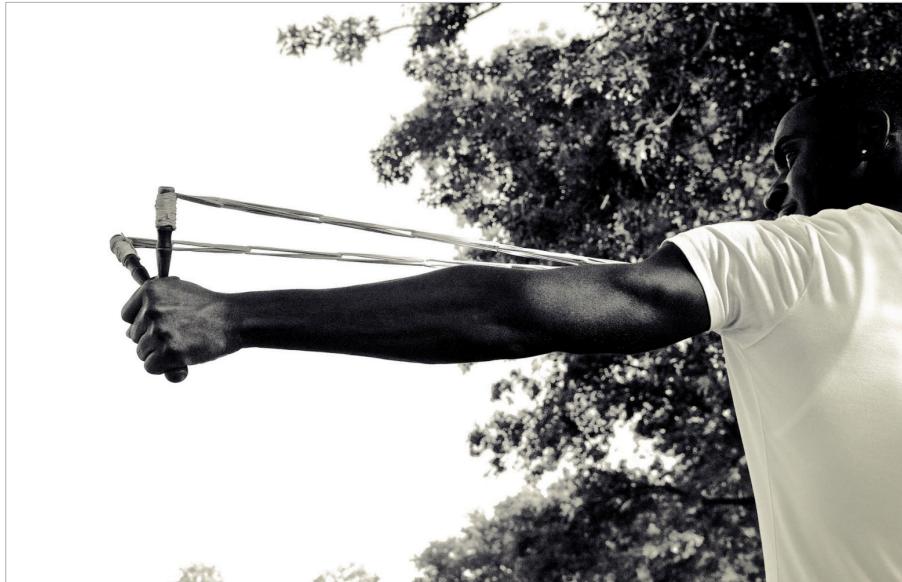
Why am I suggesting we BEAT THE RUSH back to our busyness and to our buildings?

(Oh and by the way people who know me will think I've been in the sun too long as I'm not exactly known for slowing down!)



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A friend of ours who has been coaching our leaders through a process of exploring transition as a team used the analogy of a catapult. The more you pull it back the more you tension you create; the further will be the release. The slower you go at certain points increases your momentum in the long term. Could it be that BEATING THE RUSH might cause the church to go further and ultimately faster in the long term?



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*Let's not surrender all our gains with online church, all our gains in terms of deeper connection with Jesus and one another all because we couldn't BEAT THE RUSH.*

The other danger in rushing back is we could miss what Jesus wants us to discover in this season. This is the time to reframe, rethink, reimagine, redesign and a myriad of other 're' words!

Let's not surrender all our gains with online church, all our gains in terms of deeper connection with Jesus and one another all because we couldn't BEAT THE RUSH!

Abraham Lincoln said, 'I am a slow walker but I never walk back.'

**This is the time to prepare for the new thing not simply rush back to the old!**

***Is. 43 v.18 (MSG)...."Be alert, be present I'm about to do something brand new. It's bursting out, don't you see it? There it is! I'm making a road through the desert, rivers in the badlands..."***

If we simply hurry back to our busyness and even our buildings, we may miss what God is doing, and frankly leaders that's not worth the... RUSH.