



Disaster Ministry Handbook

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Ready to Respond When Disaster Strikes

In a broken world, natural disasters and human tragedies abound. Church leaders need to ask themselves not “what will we do *if* disaster strikes?” but “what can we do *when* disaster strikes?” Based on research from real-life disasters and crisis management best practices, *Disaster Ministry Handbook* by Jamie Aten and David Boan provides the necessary tools for churches to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters of all kinds.

“Most people do not know how to effectively prepare for or respond to disasters. Moreover, in conducting research around the globe, David and I have found that there is a great deal of variability among how ready churches are for disasters,” Aten says. “Some churches in high-risk areas are relatively prepared, and others little or not at all. We have found an alarming trend – most churches realize there are threats – but few do anything ahead of time to actually prepare for disasters.”

For those ready to plan, launch and sustain disaster ministries, *Disaster Ministry Handbook* is an essential companion written by experienced professionals. Aten and Boan are codirectors of the Humanitarian Disaster Institute, a one-of-a-kind facility housed at Wheaton College that was created to equip church congregations and faith-based organizations with disaster preparation and relief skills. They have conducted research on various disasters worldwide, including Hurricane Katrina, the national H1N1 outbreak, the Haiti earthquake and the Japan tsunami.

Drawing on best practices from sources as varied as disaster relief organizations, public health departments, emergency management agencies and trauma studies, Aten and Boan offer a step-by-step guide through the entire process, from conducting an initial assessment and careful planning to responding effectively during the immediate crisis and in the long-term recovery period that follows. Case studies from churches of all sizes and types are included to demonstrate a range of effective models. Church leaders will learn how to develop a practical “congregation preparedness” plan, including features such as a vision statement, risk assessment form, communications strategy and emergency supplies kit list. Reproducible spiritual and emotional care tip sheets are also included for training on topics such as recognizing common stress reactions, developing listening skills and avoiding burnout for volunteers.

Whether it’s advance preparation during the best of times or responsible action in the worst of times, *Disaster Ministry Handbook* will equip church leaders to act lovingly and effectively in all seasons.

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