
[Churches Learn from Chardon HS Tragedy](#)

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In an all too common news report these days we learned five students were shot and three killed in an apparent gun incident in Chardon, OH this week.

CEN calls on the Christian community to pray for Christians, churches, and first responders in Chardon, OH today, including their Governor who himself asked for prayer for the whole state and to pray for its own biblical readiness.

Chardon HS, unlike churches seldom with emergency plans in place, had physically and functionally practiced drills for these types of incidents. Most students, in fact, thought this was just another drill until they heard gunshots and screams. During practice drills they had been instructed to go to the nearest classroom, shut off the lights, lock the door and not use their cell phones only for text messaging to ask for help, which they did during this real incident. Students had practiced what they should do to get to a room of safety, protect from intrusion, and then to work with local first responders by not interfering with communications. They had learned that talking on the cell phones would interfere with efforts for their own safety. These students complied and may have saved lives by responding according to the school emergency operations plan. Everyone appeared to follow instructions including the parents when picking up their kids from school, they followed the sheriff in terms of orderly going in and out of the crime scene.

There is another tragedy which may not be reported that is happening alongside this one. Unlike the schools, many businesses, and other critical infrastructure many churches in the broader private sector of our community have not learned these basic lessons of personal safety for the times in which we live.

Yes, we will learn once again how social media played a role in emergency response. As we have seen in many recent incidents the social media has had its own pluses and minus grades in incidents like these. On the one hand, text messages reported the incident quickly which may have spared lives, and informed many on the outside of the school how to help, as well as to informed parents of their child's safety to respond. On the other hand, some of the messages were not accurate giving false information on the identification of the shooter for example, way before verification by law enforcement. Over time, the accuracy of tweets and the volume will produce an accurate report of the incident helpful to the investigation but not before going through the entire response to recovery process. Communication does not stand alone in the emergency response process. It requires professionals, volunteers, and the faith community to respond in together.

But there is another form of communications which is not getting viral attention. And that is the churches own level of readiness. Churches can take a page out of the Chardon HS incident in that they too are not exempt from lone wolf type incidents. They are soft targets when it comes to these incidents. Yet, most churches today to not have any

emergency plan in place and few do practice drills to protect their congregants in order to spare lives.

[ReadyChurch](#) was designed to help churches become ready to respond, just like the students at Chardon HS. Emergencies can occur with or without notice, as in this incident today, yet both mandate a biblical response. There is more to responding to any incident, whether large or small, from a purely physical point of view. With each emergency everyone involved is affected in some way spiritually, emotionally, mentally as well as physically. The church is uniquely positioned to respond to the spiritual, yet often neglects the other legs of the response table.

[ReadyChurch](#) helps the church learn the basics of a total biblical response to emergencies of all kinds. Thankfully, the Chardon HS will have little regret physically because they are ready. The church can help now spiritually and emotionally for the community to recover.

Let us pray for our churches to become ready to biblically respond in Chardon, OH as well as worldwide as our society becomes more and more fragile having moved further and further away from God. ReadyChurch

Let us pray for Christians to learn how to become biblically ready to respond.

[ReadyChristian](#)

Let us pray for the survivors of the Chardon, OH school, that God may use this to draw them closer to Him, to each other, and to Glorify Our Savior. There were Christian young people involved, may they speak boldly and lovingly of their ability to stand strong in this crisis. (I Peter 3:15)

Will you join CEN in praying today?