



## Digital Ministry Quick Start Guide

Here is a list of ideas to get your digital ministry off the ground. Remember, you don't have to tackle them all at once. The ideas can be implemented at any time and will prove effective in the long run.

### 1. Start a Social Media account

This means more than having a Facebook page or Instagram account. Take the time to create a strategy that aims to build relationships and create engagement. Social media is a great way to connect with people in the community around your church and learn more about what their needs are. In addition, you can share your church's content more easily with people all around you. Use the platform to get to know your audience better instead of only promoting events at your church.

### 2. Optimize your website

These days, before someone visits a church, they will search for you on Google. People want to see what your online presence is like and from there, they make decisions whether they want to visit or not. Make sure the website provides relevant content, caters to visitors, shows accurate and reliable information, and meets the needs of people visiting the site. In other words, don't just talk about your church. Also, make sure your website is updated and doesn't look like something from the stone age.

### 3. Start a podcast

Think of all the people you could reach with a podcast! Drivers and riders on long commutes, joggers and walkers, people working on chores at home, and the list goes on. Approximately 90 million people listen to podcasts every month. That's nearly one-third of the US population. Simply put, if your church wants to reach more people, creating a podcast (or several) would be the way to go. It doesn't have to be fancy. Many services will distribute your podcast for free and you can record using nothing more than your laptop.

### 4. Write a blog

These days, people turn to blogs for information on a variety of topics. Large companies use blogs to meet the demands of their current and potential customers. Churches who use blogs have a greater potential to increase their reach and drive more traffic to their website. Before you jump into blogging, here are few things to keep in mind:

- Write for skimmers (readers who skim and article instead of reading through) use paragraph headers to help with this.
- Use attention grabbing headlines (but not click-bait) be honest.
- Write for your audience, be relevant
- ***This is not an opportunity to post this week's sermon text***



## **5. Launch a YouTube Channel**

YouTube is the second most popular search engine on the internet. Over 30 million users visit the platform every day! Of course, there is a constant fight for the attention of users, but this should not deter churches from having a YouTube channel.

Be creative. Know what kind of content your audience needs and create videos to meet those needs. You don't need a heap of expensive equipment to start. A phone with a great camera works well enough!

Shoot videos in front of a window (or wherever there's good lighting) and invest in a good mic for quality sound. Keep the focus of your channel tight. Whether you want to create videos on philosophy, finance, healthy living, or raising children, churches should keep their target audience in mind when producing videos.

## **6. Host an online Bible study**

Do a quick search online to see what people are talking about. What are their concerns and fears? Then, design a study to show how Christ can show up in that space. Send out an invite online (or design business cards to share when you're out and about) encouraging people to join a video through Zoom or another video conferencing platform. People will always have questions about religion, Jesus, and the Bible, but they are not always willing to step into a church building. Give a boost by providing this opportunity to meet them where they are.

## **7. Use creatives in your church**

Like every other area of expertise, there are people who are trained to do certain kinds of work. When it comes to digital and design work for your church, it would be wise to seek out experts. If you want to strengthen your online presence, show value to those who work in the online space.

## **8. Go Live**

Going Live on Facebook doesn't always mean streaming your worship service. The best Live videos are the ones that are intentional about engaging with their viewers. There are countless ways for your church to creatively use the "Live" button.

Cooking demos, how-to videos, visiting new places, health videos, and interviews are examples of what you could do to connect with your audience.

## **9. Use Social Media ads**

If you want to drive visitors to your page or site, you need ads. Of course, you can reach users naturally if your content shows up in their feed. This is called organic reach. However, it's becoming increasingly difficult to reach your audience without paid ads.



This isn't a novel idea. Churches have spent thousands of dollars to print flyers, tracts or buy ads in their local papers. Now social media allows you to spend a fraction of the cost while being more effective in reaching people.

## **10. Get the right equipment**

While many churches can accomplish their goals with cellphone as your media work increases and your audience grows, you may find it necessary to improve your equipment. It is easy to get caught in the black hole of acquiring expensive equipment, you should focus on what your needs are and get the best tools to help you accomplish your goals. If you are not "techy" get advise from a someone who works with media gear and can help guide you.

## **11. Use Keywords**

A keyword is and idea or topic that defines what your content is about. When someone types in a Google search, they are using keywords. Google uses that keyword as a code to gather information related to that search.

The websites that Google finds to be most relevant in relation to the keyword are put at the top of the first page. Using the right keyword helps your website rank higher. That means more people will be reached by your ministry. Using keywords is a part of SEO (search engine optimization).

Although SEO and keyword research might sound complicated, there are many ways to start practicing today.

## **12. Create Facebook events**

The next time your church has an event coming up, create a Facebook event and ask church members to invite their friends and neighbors. Keep in mind, this works great if your church is located in a populated area where the demographic is most likely to use Facebook.

It also give church members an opportunity to invite their family in friends to the event in an easy way by sharing.

People are motivated when they see who responded to attend! Facebook Events allows invitees to see who plans to be there. Facebook will even send reminders to those who have RSVP'd.

## **13. Create infographics**

Infographics are a creative and fun way to share detailed information. Want to share a scripture about Good Friday? Put it in an infographic.

Even if you don't know how to design an infographic, free sites like Canva.com can be helpful.

## **14. Record stories of faith**

Video is the king of content and people love stories! People in your church have stories to share. Record these stories and share them on your church website and social media. They are a great way



to share the heart of your ministry and build community. Encourage members to share these videos and drive more traffic to your site.

### **15. Learn and implement SEO**

Search Engine Optimization is the practice of improving the organic (unpaid) traffic to a website through various methods including editing, content creation, using keywords, adding alt text, and others. While this term might seem more like marketing it can also be an evangelism tool, and is very important to the growth of a the church. Why?

Because online seekers are looking for information about faith, God, religion and the Bible and how all of that might fit into their lives. In short, you! If your website is not optimized, they will go to other web pages to get the info they want.

### **16. Start a Visitor Newsletter**

Collect email addresses from visitors and send regular content you know will be useful to them. The newsletter should be an extension of the experience they had at your church, live stream, small group, etc.

A successful newsletter campaign will keep your visitors connected with your church and what's happening. With regular content coming in there is a greater chance that they will engage with your church again and become rooted in your community.

### **17. Make your website mobile friendly**

Mobile-friendly website ensure that visitors will see your content clearly on their phone or tablet. If the site is not designed to fit smaller screens, viewers will see images that are cut off and misplaced words. This looks unprofessional and can cause your visitors to click on to another page.

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