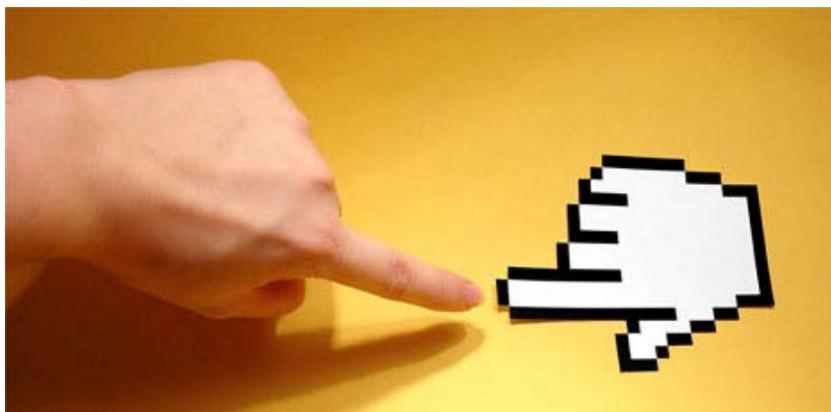


Web Ministry: Blogging



Would you like to reach 1.596 billion people^[1] every day with your church's ministry and mission absolutely free? Then you might be ready to start a blog. With nearly 120,000 new blogs appearing in cyberspace each day^[2], it is time for your church to harness this free online communications tool. A blog is a "Web log" originally developed as an electronic journal or diary for people to share personal experiences.

Today, blogs by individuals and groups range from ranting to grassroots organizing to faith journey and resource sharing. Creating a blog for your local church is a quick and easy way to share information and generate interest and involvement for a particular ministry. It is also ideal for engaging members, visitors and seekers in conversations about their spiritual lives and faith questions.

Your pastor could host a "Sermon Reflections" blog where people offer insights about the Scripture readings that form the foundation of the Sunday sermon or share real-life examples of biblical stories. Perhaps your missions committee could host a blog to enlist support for the congregation's disaster-relief efforts or the community food pantry.

Consider creating a blog that lists upcoming events, highlights stories of changing lives, reports ministry news or provides devotionals. Your blog also can include links to your church Web site, display photographs, and feature video and audio clips.

A successful blog has a clear focus and is to-the-point and genuine. Target a specific audience or interest group—and be consistent. People will be more likely to read and subscribe to your blog if you write frequent, short posts and invite comments.

If you know how to send and receive e-mail, you can create and host a dynamic blogging ministry for your church in just a few minutes. It is a free, easy way to connect with people.

To get started with your blogging ministry today, follow these steps:

1. Have a clear focus in mind and know whom you intend to reach. Then, choose a title for your blog.
2. Sign up for a free account with blogger.com or wordpress.com. If you are starting a personal blog, create a profile for yourself. If you are starting a church blog, create a profile for the church.
3. Decide if your blog will be open to everyone or a defined group that you invite.
4. Decide if you want to enable comments and if you want to moderate comments before they are posted.
5. Add links from your blog to your church Web site and other appropriate Web sites and blogs relevant to your blog's focus.
6. Enable RSS—a family of Web feed formats—so people can subscribe easily to your blog.
7. Create your first blog post. Remember to stay focused, keep it short and appeal to your target audience.
8. On your church Web site, create a link to your blog.
9. List your blog with other sites like Methoblog.com to gain exposure and readership.
10. Decide how frequently you will post and stick to a schedule.

Building a blogging ministry immediately increases your church's exposure beyond its walls and extends a big welcome in cyberspace. Your congregation can easily expand its ministry throughout the week and keep people engaged every day of the week, not just on Sunday.