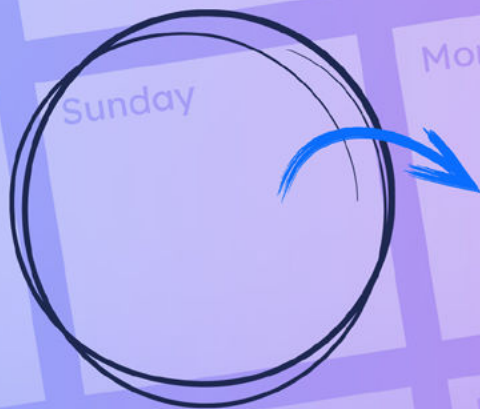


From Sunday to Every Day:

Unlocking the Full Potential
of Church Engagement



INTRODUCTION

From the start, church wasn't an occasional event on Christians' calendars. It was a way of life. In the early Church, members "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42 ESV).

The world, technology, and many other parts of life have changed since then, but one thing that has stayed the same is humanity's innate need to be with others, to learn and grow together.

UCLA neuroscientist and professor Matthew Lieberman wrote in the book [Social: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Connect](#), "A growing body of research shows that the need to connect socially with others is as basic as our need for food, water and shelter." And [Harvard Women's Health Watch](#) reported, "Dozens of studies have shown that people who have satisfying relationships with family, friends, and their community are happier, have fewer health problems, and live longer."

People's longing for connection, fellowship, and togetherness has remained constant, and so has the mission of the Church—to go out and tell the world about Jesus. But the method for sharing, connecting, and engaging with the world has changed. Instead of gathering around a dinner table or filing into a pew once a week, people now also gather around apps, screens, and even the [metaverse](#)!

So how can you measure your ministry's impact in this predominantly digital age?

The key metric isn't attendance anymore. It's engagement.

According to Carey Nieuwhof, "engagement is anything a person does that furthers the mission God has given you... Engagement fuels involvement. Involvement fuels passion. Passion fuels invitation."

A fully engaged church will have members excited to connect and invest in the community. But how do you foster engagement that goes past just Sunday? How do you empower your ministry and congregation to engage with one another throughout the entire week? In the following pages, we'll explore the importance of meaningful engagement and cover how to unlock its full potential with strategies and discussion questions for your staff so that your church can have an impact every day of the week.

IT STARTS ON SUNDAY



In a world where we can access anything we want, any time and anywhere, it's easy to see why people want more from their church experience than a single hour on a single day. But when it comes to building daily connections with your congregation, there's no better place to start than on Sunday.

Sunday mornings set the tone for the rest of the week, not just for your congregants but for your engagement efforts too. It's the perfect opportunity to inspire and equip your members to take what they've learned and apply it to their everyday lives.

Creating an engaging in-person experience

In-person attendance can't be the only metric your church is tracking. But having a building full of people connecting, learning, and growing together—just like the early Church did in Acts—is still a great goal. That's why you need to intentionally create a welcoming atmosphere that fosters positive energy and unification from the moment anyone steps through the door.

We understand that you want to make sure every visitor feels welcomed, valued, and encouraged when they attend church. You've been anxiously waiting and preparing for it all week! For many visitors, their journey with your church starts in the parking lot. Consider setting aside some parking spots close to the front of the building just for first-time guests. Having volunteers on hand to guide traffic and ensure a smooth flow

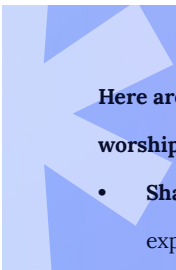
can make a big difference, helping both newcomers and long-time members kick off their in-person experience on a positive note.

When visitors walk through your doors, we know you're ready and excited to welcome them with open arms. That warm cup of coffee and friendly conversation waiting inside your church can make all the difference in ensuring a positive and memorable experience that stays with them long after they leave. Have volunteers and staff available to meet people to help them get orientated, assisting with finding seats, pointing out where to drop off their kids, and showing where the bathrooms are.

And remember, sometimes, the simplest gestures can have the greatest impact. A handshake and a friendly "Welcome! We're glad you're here!" can help visitors feel right at home.

Lon Solomon, who led McLean Bible Church for over 35 years, had a unique approach—during his sermons, he'd prompt the congregation to ask, "SO WHAT?" and then offer a practical application of the message. Now, that's just one way to go about engaging with people in the service. You don't have to follow Lon's method exactly, but think about new ways to involve your members more directly.

Maybe it's sparking thought-provoking discussions, or setting aside moments for quiet reflection and prayer. These situations help foster a sense of community and participation. They can turn an ordinary service into a deeply rewarding worship experience that resonates with your congregation. Every step you take towards engaging your members can lead to a more fulfilling and rewarding worship experience.



Here are a few more suggestions to consider adding into your Sunday worship service:

- **Share congregant stories:** Invite members to share personal experiences or stories that relate to the theme of the sermon. This not only personalizes the service but also creates a deeper connection among the church community.
- **Use creative visuals:** Whether it's through video clips, imagery, or customized branding for each sermon series, these elements can provide another layer of interest and connection for your attendees. There are many sites where you can find professional looking stock, and even some great tools for easily designing or editing elements.
- **Enhance experiences with your app:** Studies have shown that taking notes helps you retain information. Tools like the Pushpay App's fill-in-the-blank sermon notes help your audience remember and reflect on the message during Sunday's service and throughout the week.

But while all of those strategies are great, we know in-person attendance isn't always possible. *According to Gallup, only 20% of Americans attend church in person every week.* Which brings us to our next point...

Digital experiences for Sundays

The digital landscape is continuously evolving and influencing how we connect with each other. Adapting to these changes (and even simply keeping up with them!) can be challenging. But a high-quality online experience is a necessary way for your church to build relationships with viewers who may be unable or aren't ready to physically attend.

The goal for your online worship experience is the same as in-person; create an environment where members connect, learn, and grow with one another. That's why it's essential to offer everything you provide in person to your online community. Then, your ministry seamlessly flows between in-person and online church.

While you may not be able to offer your digital attendees a hot cup of coffee, you can have volunteers greeting people, and responding to the chat during the service. They can also respond to prayer requests, provide encouragement and advice for next steps like baptism, and offer other avenues for virtual connection, like downloading your church app or joining an online small group. Work with your communications team and tech team (or maybe even check out [ChatGPT!](#)) to develop pre-written chat scripts and source links to helpful resources.

The power of livestreaming

Livestreaming your service is a crucial element to your digital church experience, so we wanted to dedicate an entire section to the power of livestreaming.

Livestreaming quickly became an essential tool for engaging with congregants who couldn't physically attend during the 2020 pandemic. Fast-forward to today, and livestreaming has grown into a crucial component of church technology and ministry strategy.

But there's a reason livestreaming has remained such a popular option for churches: it helps you reach a wider audience. By making your worship experience available online, you can connect with people who may not have access to traditional church services due to distance, illness, or other reasons. A [2023 report from Pew Research](#) found that **22% of Christians said they watch online services more often than before the**

pandemic. Online church gives you convenient ways to reach new people and increase the impact of your message.

Livestreaming is also a powerful way to engage with your community during a time where digital is the default. [Grey Matter Research](#) found that 61% of evangelicals who experienced online services don't feel in-person services are superior to online in terms of a person's ability to learn from the teaching. One in ten even said they learn better with online services. By leaning into livestreaming, you're meeting people where they're at and making it easier to learn and grow.

Livestreaming isn't just about broadcasting your services. It's a stepping stone that can lead to your congregants using these tools regularly, deepening their connection with your church, and ultimately enriching their spiritual journey.

Our [2023 State of Church Tech](#) report found the number of churches livestreaming services remained steady from last year at 89%. But what are those churches doing to optimize their livestream experience?

1. **Stream to multiple destinations:** Share your service on social media, your website, your church app, and even event hosting platforms so you can be sure your stream is as accessible as possible.
2. **Add subtitles:** 80% of people are more likely to watch an entire video if there are captions, so this quick addition helps everyone fully engage in the service.
3. **Experiment with different formats:** Try testing different formats for your services. Your youth ministry may prefer a podcast or interview-message to keep the service fresh and engaging, and adult ministries could break out of routine with roundtable discussions or guest speakers.

Livestreaming directly to your own website and church app can be instrumental in building your online brand. It's about creating a central hub for your community to gather, learn and grow. When you drive people to your own digital platforms as the first point of contact, it opens up the door for them to continue engaging with your brand through these tools, instead of social media platforms you don't own.

Best of all? When you integrate your livestreams on your owned spaces (think your website, app, or on-demand content library) you're in control. So even if there are changes in policies or algorithms on social media sites, your messages stay where you placed them, still ready to be watched and engaged by anyone scrolling around online.

Here are a few more tips to consider when creating your digital worship experience:

- **Invest in high-quality technology:** From cameras and microphones, to streaming software, investing in quality technology will ensure a better experience for your online members. Our [comprehensive guide](#) can help you get started choosing the best streaming equipment.
- **Use interactive tools:** Incorporate interactive elements such as polls, chatrooms, or Q&A sessions to help engage your online members and create a sense of community. Pushpay's customizable church app can offer capabilities like digital sign-up sheets, polls, note taking capabilities, and more—providing an interactive and immersive experience.
- **Encourage connection:** Encourage attendees to connect with one another after the service through social media or other digital mediums, like your church app. You can also inspire people to connect through church-led activities, like small groups, bible studies, volunteer groups,

and more. This helps to extend relationships beyond Sunday morning, fostering a strong sense of community throughout the week.

- **Leverage sim-live videos:** Consider replaying or scheduling videos digitally recorded throughout the week. This offers flexibility and allows members to engage with the church at their convenience.
- **Optimize with analytics:** With analytics, you can pinpoint the best days and times for your digital services. Many churches are now adding a mid-week digital service based on these insights. This data-driven strategy can help you tailor your experiences to your members' needs and preferences and enhance their engagement.

The goal is to create a seamless and engaging digital worship experience that mirrors your in-person experience. Doing so will create a space where online members feel invested in, and will invite them to spiritually grow with your ministry as an integral part of the church community.

Discussion questions:

The following questions are designed to help you reflect on your current Sunday morning experience and evaluate how to improve engagement, both in-person and online. We encourage you to spend time considering each question and discuss them with members of your staff so everyone can be part of creating a fully engaged church.

- How do you believe your congregants feel walking into your church or logging into your livestream on Sunday mornings?
- How can you create a welcoming atmosphere that begins with the parking lot and extends throughout your church? How can you do the same for online attendees?

- How do you currently engage your audience during the worship service?
- Are there ways to incorporate creative visuals or interactive elements to make your worship service more engaging and memorable?
- What steps can you take to ensure your online church experience is on par with your in-person service? How can you create meaningful connections with viewers who are unable to attend in person?
- Are there any gaps between your online and in-person experience?
- How are you measuring your livestream viewership to make sure you're creating an engaging culture there as well?
- Where are there opportunities to experiment and improve your in-person and online Sunday morning experience?

Notes

MAKING MINISTRY MORE THAN SUNDAY




Engaging your community is more than just a Sunday morning activity—it's an ongoing process. While worship services are great for building connections, engaging with your community throughout the week is crucial for the success of your ministry. With countless ways to connect, from podcasts to posts on social media to push notifications, there are daily opportunities to strengthen relationships and foster a communal sense of belonging.

Cultivating a culture of engagement

We know your goal isn't just to fill seats on Sunday morning or rack up social media followers. When you think about engagement, you envision meaningful connections within your church family that enable spiritual growth and make a real impact in the lives of those you serve. But building this kind of engaged community requires more than just a catchy tagline or an expansive tech stack. It requires a deliberate and intentional effort to cultivate a culture of engagement that permeates every aspect of your church's operations.

But let's note that that task doesn't rest on your shoulders alone. Each member of your church has a role in building this, from staff members to volunteers to congregants. Everyone has unique gifts that can support the ministry and further the church's mission, and by recognizing these gifts, your ministry can create a thriving community that's engaged inside and outside the church building.

One of the most important steps in cultivating a culture of engagement is to get your church staff fully committed to the cause. After all, they are the ones who will be leading the charge and setting an example for the rest of the church community.



At Pushpay and Resi, we appreciate the vital role your church staff plays in fostering engagement. Here are some ways we've seen other churches cultivate connection and participation that you could try:

- 1. Communicate your vision:** Start by clearly communicating your vision and explain why it's important for the church. Make sure everyone understands what you hope to achieve and why it matters. Share success stories and case studies from other churches that have successfully built engaged communities.
- 2. Empower them to make a difference:** Encourage your staff to take ownership of their roles and find ways to help. Celebrate their successes and encourage them to keep pushing the envelope.
- 3. Equip them for success:** Invest in new tools and training to help them manage their work efficiently.
- 4. Foster collaboration and teamwork:** Encourage staff members to work collaboratively and support each other. Create opportunities for teams to work together and advocate for new ideas to be heard. Engagement and discipleship work hand-in-hand within successful cultures, so be sure to cultivate this balance from the inside out.

5. **Lead by example:** Make sure you're leading by example. Set the tone for a culture of engagement by being engaged and committed yourself.
6. **Set goals:** Define engagement goals that you and your team can work together to achieve and celebrate any accomplishments you hit. This builds a sense of comradery and kinship, resulting in authentic engagement from everyone involved.
7. **Show your team you trust them:** By recognizing each staff member's unique gifts, you can create a sense of purpose that drives engagement and inspires your team to achieve your ministry's goals.

With your staff onboard and excited to engage, it's time to focus on your congregation. Attending services and events can sometimes slip into a passive routine for members. Here are some practical ways to engage your church body in creating a culture of engagement:

1. **Communicate the mission:** Your church has a powerful mission, and your congregants are crucial players in fulfilling it. Share your mission often—on your website, on the stage, and in your conversations. Help them see why engagement matters and how their involvement is vital for success.
2. **Provide opportunities for involvement:** Offer a range of opportunities for congregants to get involved. This can include volunteer work, community outreach, small group gatherings, or other initiatives that align with the church's mission. Make sure these opportunities are well-communicated and accessible to everyone.
3. **Create a sense of ownership:** When your members feel they have an active role and responsibility, they'll be more invested in your church's mission and seek opportunities to make an impact.

- 4. Implement a system for feedback and communication:** Make sure there's an open line of communication between leadership and congregants. Encourage feedback and suggestions, and be responsive to the needs and concerns of your community.
- 5. Emphasize the impact of engagement:** Finally, make sure your congregation understands that their active engagement makes a real difference in the world. Share stories and examples of how the work of the church is positively impacting the community and invite congregants to join your efforts.

Engaging your community is crucial to fulfilling the mission “go and make disciples of all nations.” Here are four ways to engage with your community:

- 1. Serve your community:** Getting involved in community service projects is a great way to build relationships with the people who live where your ministry has intentionally been placed. Partner with local organizations to clean up parks, build homes, or feed the homeless.
- 2. Share your space:** Your church building can be a valuable resource for your community. Consider opening up your space for community events or meetings, providing a safe and welcoming environment for community members to interact in.
- 3. Provide relief:** During difficult times, providing relief to those in need can be a powerful way to demonstrate your church's commitment to service and reach those who are in most need of hope and help. Assess what your community needs and offer what you can: food, shelter, or other basic necessities, and make sure you have a way to lead your church and community during this time.

4. **Partner with schools and nonprofits:** Whether you choose to volunteer your time, donate supplies, or sponsor events, partnering with local schools and global nonprofits can be a great way to engage with your current community and expand your community past just who's near your physical building.

Discussion questions

To evaluate your church's engagement level, reflect on these questions and see where you stand. Cultivating a culture of engagement takes effort, but with the right strategies, your church has the potential to be a place where members feel deeply connected, truly valued, and empowered to grow in their faith.

- How many members attend services or events regularly?
- Have you noticed specific days when your content generates more activity or engagement? Could this be an opportunity to introduce a new service or event?
- How often do members volunteer or participate in ministry activities? What are the most popular ways to participate?
- Are there any trends or patterns in attendance or participation?
- How often do members engage with the church through social media or other online channels?
- What types of activities or programs seem to be most popular among members?

Growing engagement

Creating intentional opportunities for growth and connection can make all the difference in helping congregants feel connected, invested, and empowered to grow in their faith. Here are some proven strategies to increase engagement:

Create a clear discipleship process

Every congregation member has different spiritual needs as they go through their faith journey. That's where intentionally designed discipleship programs come in. They provide tailored support to help congregants connect to your church, deepen their understanding of the gospel and strengthen their faith.

[On our Moving Mountains podcast](#), Pastor Mark Bofill with Calvary Worship Center in Colorado Springs, CO, shared their D.N.A. discipleship process with Pushpay's ChMS, so new visitors and established members alike could grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Small groups for different stages of life and interests

We all long for authentic relationships. Creating a [diverse range of small groups](#) that caters to various interests and life stages allows for fostering deeper connections based on shared experiences. Whether it's a book club, a sports team, or a parenting support group, they become spaces where congregants can discuss faith matters, pray together, and build lasting bonds within the church community.

Nurture the next generation

The students in your sanctuary and Sunday school classrooms will one day be leaders in your church and community. As [The Road At Chapel Hills discovered](#), when you prioritize this ministry, you can help create a safe and welcoming environment for young people to explore their faith, ask tough questions, and develop a deeper

connection with God. [Shepherd of the Valley Church](#) found that regular gatherings, engaging mission trips, and interactive events are all great ways to meet students where they are and build meaningful connections that will last a lifetime.

Engaging your congregation isn't a one-size-fits-all approach. It requires intentional efforts to meet people where they are, understand their unique needs, and provide avenues for meaningful connections and growth. As you implement these strategies, watch your church community come alive with passion, involvement, and a shared mission.

By developing intentional processes and spaces for growth and connection, congregants feel valued, inspired, and empowered to make a difference. It takes time and effort, but with the right strategies and commitment, your church can become a space where all members feel connected and invested in their spiritual growth.

Leveraging technology for engagement

While we touched on some amazing digital tools to grow engagement, there are also a ton of other digital resources you can use to enhance engagement as well. Let's explore some of the best ways you can use tech to engage your congregation past Sunday.

Social media

One of the most powerful strategies for enhancing digital engagement throughout the week is to leverage social media. With classic platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, or newer emerging ones like TikTok and Threads, you can keep your members up-to-date on upcoming events and opportunities, share relevant content, and foster community engagement.

The key to making the most of social media—no matter which platform it is or which new trend has started—is creating content that resonates with your audience. As you share bite-sized devotionals, thought-provoking quotes, and real-life stories, make sure they feel relevant and are written intentionally for your audience. And don't forget to encourage your congregation to get involved by sharing their own stories, insights, and prayer requests! It's also worth considering using visual content like short videos that give people a glimpse into church life, highlight upcoming events, or offer behind-the-scenes moments that make your community feel more connected.

Church app

A dedicated [church app](#) can be a game-changer for digital engagement. With a mobile app, you can offer your congregation a convenient and centralized hub for accessing resources, staying updated on church news, and engaging with various activities.

Through the app, your members can easily access sermon video archives, Bible study materials, event calendars, and giving options, all from the palm of their hands. Plus, a church app unlocks interactive features that enhance engagement and build community, like sermon notes, interactive polls, groups, and volunteer opportunities. These features help foster ongoing communication, encourage collaborative learning, and form deeper connections among your congregation.

On-demand content

With all the amazing videos your church creates, it's time to give them a proper home in a [comprehensive content library](#). This will allow individuals to explore and engage with the content that resonates most with them. Imagine the impact this could have on your congregation by offering them a new way to deepen their faith.

Organize your video content into curated playlists based on themes, topics, or series. This allows your members to navigate your content library effortlessly and find videos that pique their personal interests. Whether it's sermons, Bible teachings, testimonies, or special events, curated playlists create a user-friendly experience, making it convenient for members to access relevant and engaging content.

Data-driven insights

There's no need to play the guessing game when it comes to understanding your congregation. You likely already have [valuable data that can significantly enhance your congregation's experience](#). It can show trends and patterns you might not spot otherwise. If you take a look at things like attendance numbers, event participation, and how people interact with you online, you'll begin to understand what truly engages your members. And once you know that, you can start tailoring your services, activities, and how you chat with your congregation to make those interactions even better.

Digital Bible studies and prayer walls

Hosting virtual discussion groups and online prayer sessions is a great way to encourage members to engage with Scripture and develop meaningful relationships. And by creating dedicated discussion spaces on your website or app, congregants can join conversations, ask questions, and share insights with their peers.

A virtual prayer wall on your website or app offers a safe space for individuals to share their prayer requests and receive support from the community. It also ultimately helps foster meaningful connections among your congregation as they lift each other up in times of need.

Donor development with a ChMS

When you first start out in ministry and only have a few donors, it's easy to keep data in a simple spreadsheet. But once your church grows and you have data for hundreds or thousands of donors, a spreadsheet just falls short. To keep your donors engaged and connected with your ministry, it's important to have the right tools, like a ChMS, in place to engage your supporters before, during, and after their donation. With this tool in your box, you can create a database of your congregation full of insights into donor history, engagement, and where givers are on their donor journey—all of which can help drive engagement.

One of the easiest ways is to include personalization within your donor communications. The extra time taken to personalize messages makes members more likely to donate and makes donors feel recognized and appreciated. It tells them they're not just another name in a database; they're a partner in your ministry.

Discussion questions:

The following discussion questions are designed to help you reflect on your current use of technology and evaluate how to improve engagement for congregants both in person and online. We encourage you to take the time to consider each question and discuss them with other members of your staff so everyone can be part of the efforts to create a fully engaged church. For a deeper dive into this topic, take our free Church Tech Check assessment.

Take the Assessment

- Which technology do you currently leverage to connect with your members during the week?
- Are there any particular challenges you've faced when trying to engage your congregation digitally, and how have you addressed them?
- How can you use tech to foster a sense of community outside of Sunday services?
- What steps can you take to ensure that your digital engagement efforts align with your overall ministry goals?
- How can you make sure that the digital engagement efforts are accessible to all members of the congregation, including those who may be technologically challenged or have limited internet access?
- What steps can we take to make sure that our digital engagement strategies are sustainable and continue to benefit our congregation in the long run?

BUILDING A PLAN FOR ENGAGEMENT



Engagement starts with intentionality, so having a plan is vital to making your ministry more than Sunday. The strategies we've outlined above can all work together to engage your congregation throughout the week, but only your team can know what's best for your community.

Take time to review the discussion questions with other leaders in your church, elders, and staff to collectively determine what works best for your congregation. Keep in mind that this process should also include input from your members, as their perspectives can offer valuable insights. From there, you can create an engagement plan tailored to the needs and interests of your people.

Once you've settled on which strategies to test first, it's important to set goals for each and create a plan for tracking those goals. This way, you can track whether your efforts effectively enhance engagement over time. Whether you're hosting events, creating online content, or using tech to communicate with your community, there's always room for growth.

Closing Thoughts

Engaging your congregation on a daily basis doesn't have to be complicated. By leveraging the right tools and creating systems that prioritize connection, communication, collaboration, and service, you can create an environment where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued. With intentional effort and commitment from church leaders and members, your church can become a space where all feel connected and invested in their spiritual growth.

At Pushpay, we understand the value of building relationships within your church, and we're here to support you in strengthening those relationships and furthering your mission. We believe engaging your congregation throughout the week can help create a more vibrant and connected community.

To learn more about how Pushpay and Resi can help you create a More Than Sunday environment, take a self-guided tour of our products, or feel free to talk with one of our staff for a [full demo](#).

[Take a Tour](#)



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