

8 Ways to Leverage Smartphones in Church

In 2011, smartphones were almost a novelty. Just 35% of American adults had one. That number has more than doubled in the past six years, and more than 9 in 10 adults under 30 have a smartphone ([via Pew Research](#)). When someone is considering a new phone, the question is no longer “will I get a smartphone?” but “which smartphone will I get?”

Now that this device has become almost attached to us 24-7 (I’ll be the first to admit, I’m tethered to mine), how is the church adapting? Or better yet, how should the church adapt and engage the smartphone? Here are eight ways.

1. **Live streaming.** When the TV became prevalent in the 1950s, churches began television ministries. Many of those still exist but for most churches they are cost prohibitive and provide little return on the investment required. However, live streaming for smartphones can be implemented at a fraction of the cost and often has a greater reach than television ministries.
2. **Social media.** This is an obvious inclusion. The rise of social media coincided with the rise of the smartphone. They go together like peanut butter and jelly or spaghetti and maple syrup. If your church is not active on social media, you’re missing a huge opportunity to engage your members and guests.
3. **Mobile friendly website.** There is no excuse for a church not to have a good, well designed website. Not only should a website contain pertinent information, it should display well on a phone. This is also something to consider when creating graphics. Small text gets even smaller on smartphone screens.
4. **Text giving.** We recently held a video call about giving trends in the church with several hundred leaders across North America. Text giving was the topic that drew the most questions from the audience. It’s the giving trend churches are inquiring about most. As we get more comfortable paying with our phones through Apple Pay, Paypal, and other techniques, text giving will only increase in its use in the church.
5. **Email newsletters.** While email is readily available on a computer, the fact that we’re virtually always connected to email via our smartphones means newsletters are more likely to be seen. The more they are seen and read, the better informed your congregation will be.
6. **Online or in-app sermon notes.** The proliferation of Bible apps has led to a new type of engagement of the Word during a service. My pastor even states, “open or turn on your

Bibles” each week when preparing to read from Scripture. My church also posts sermon notes online and in an app, as do many others. While I personally prefer paper note-taking, my 13-year old son types his notes into his Bible app. He stays engaged in the sermon because of his smartphone.

7. **Church management.** App- or cloud-based church management software allows church staff to have information about church events, members, or details at their fingertips regardless of their location. As more and more staff members office in community spaces (coffee shops, restaurants, etc.), this helps them stay connected to needed tools via their smartphones while working off-site.
8. **Event scheduling and reminders.** Digital calendars have all but replaced paper day planners. Setting reminders and adding calendar events via smartphone apps allow you to stay more up-to-date on church events and happenings.

Does your church use any of these already? How else does your church engage members and guests via smartphone?

> [Read more from Jonathan.](#)
