

10 Social Media Commandments

1. Thou Shalt Publish (at least) Daily

There are different rules for different platforms, but when getting started, you should publish at least once a day. Here are some suggested guidelines for churches Facebook: 1-4 times per day; Twitter: 3-10 times per day; Instagram: 1-2 times per day; SnapChat: 1-2 times per week; LinkedIn: 1-2 times per day.¹ Content should also vary between Platforms.

2. Thou Shalt Use Multiple Platforms

Different people prefer different platforms and preferences tend to be generationally based. Older generations (Silent and Baby Boomer) tend to use Facebook and blogs and younger generations (Millennial and Gen Z) tend to use Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and YouTube, and the middle generation (Generation X) uses a wide variety of platforms.² Select a platform based on who you want to reach.

3. Thou Content Shalt Reflect Thy Values

One of the biggest complaints about churches is that they are hypocritical. Know your mission, vision, and core values and let your content reflect your authenticity; be who you say you are.

4. Thou Shalt Publish Quality Content

You want users to interact with your content. If no one is liking, commenting, sharing, reposting, retweeting, repining, etc., then you need to adapt your approach.

5. Thou Shalt Interact with Followers

It does no good to post quality content that gets your followers talking if you don't interact with them! Let them know that you care they are there.

6. Thou Shalt Use Videos and Photos

Videos are the wave of the future for social media and photos are quality content for most churches. Post original videos and photos when you can and be sure to tag your followers who are featured.

7. Thou Shalt "Go Live"

In addition to videos that have already been recorded and polished, going live can help to publicize events and generate interest. Congregations should also live stream worship and special events.

¹ Ian Gardine, "Social Media Best Practices for Nonprofits: A Comprehensive Guide," Media Cause, November 6, 2017, <https://mediacause.org/social-media-best-practices-for-nonprofits/>.

² Meredith Gould, *The Social Media Gospel: Sharing the Good News in New Ways*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2015), 17, Kindle Book.

8. Thou Shalt Use Scheduling Tools

Posting can feel like a fulltime job (and it is for some people). To help it feel more manageable, use a scheduling tool and plan as far out as you are comfortable. Don't be afraid to update content depending on what's going on in your congregation, community, nation, or the world to remain relevant.

9. Thou Shalt Think of Outsiders

Remember, the goal of social media is not just to keep those who are already involved engaged throughout the week, it's to reach new people. Don't use church jargon and try to use content that might be relevant to those interested in learning more about Christianity.

10. Thou Shalt Publicize Events

One of the best ways to keep people (both inside and outside of the church) engaged is to have events. Leverage social media to promote events. During the event, post something about it. Afterward, share a video, photos, or a reflections so that people know why it was meaningful.