

Online Giving: An Essential Financial Strategy For Churches



As servants of God, we are called to practice good stewardship, and gracious giving is central to Jesus' message.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a large increase in churches making use of technology, and many provide online giving as an option. According to One Church Software, churches who provide online giving increase their tithes by 32%.¹ They emphasize that online giving is becoming the primary way that people make their offering or gift to the church because it is quick and easy. It can be done anytime and anywhere using one of the popular giving apps. Another reason is that people are able to set up automated giving. In an age when families and working professionals are extremely busy, online giving helps them to streamline their financial affairs.

Churches have embraced social media as an important way to connect with members and their communities. Platforms like Facebook and Instagram offer a way to keep members and the community informed about various ministry initiatives and events and make appeals for increased giving.

¹ <https://onechurchsoftware.com/5-important-online-giving-statistics/>

For Church members and visitors online giving can provide:

Convenience: Like banking online, once you set up your account, you can make contributions at any time or set up recurring deductions through your checking account or credit card.

Easy tracking: Church members can readily download a statement of their giving for their personal records or tax purposes.

For Churches online giving can:

Be cost effective: Most software systems can be linked to the church's electronic accounting system, reducing administrative tasks and costs.

Decrease the likelihood of reduced giving at certain times of the year: During the summer months when people are away on vacation or other periods of decreased attendance, the convenience factor can encourage consistent giving, particularly if members set up automated contributions.

Provide a way to connect with younger members: Studies show that Millennials' and Gen Z are mobile givers who place a high priority on convenience. By providing one or more ways to give online, younger members are more likely to opt for automated giving.

Online giving is not only used for the weekly offering: Many churches are using online giving to raise funds for a variety of reasons from building campaigns to disaster relief. Whether your church is new to online giving or has been offering it for a while, see the sidebar for useful "Do's and Don'ts" gleaned from traditional non-profit organizations.

Do's



Keep your Message Short!

Keep your email solicitations short and to the point. Recipients don't like reading long wordy e-mails. Include enough information to instruct individuals on how to make a gift, then provide links or QR codes for them to obtain more information from your website. Speed is important—if it takes more than a minute to submit their gift, givers will GIVE UP.

Give your Donors Options

Just because individuals find you online doesn't necessarily mean they want to give online. If you use a "Donate Here" button, make sure you also include your mailing address and instructions for making a contribution the old-fashioned way.

Include Offline Contact Information

List a way for individuals to contact you directly or how to receive more information. Make sure your church includes a link to your website and your organization's phone number in every fundraising email you send out.

Keep the Process Simple

Ask only for the information you need to accept the gift. This is not the opportunity to get information to promote future ministry events.

Be Sure to Say "Thank You"

Acknowledge their generosity and demonstrate your appreciation. Let givers know that their gift will be used to bless God's people in a variety of ministries.

Don'ts



Bury your Online Giving Button

If the donate button is buried somewhere deep in your website, individuals won't know that it's there. Make the button visible on the home page with a direct link to your donation page. You should have a call to action for your online donation page linked to multiple places on your website.

Call it Something Different in Print and on your Website

Keep your messaging and reference to online giving consistent. Whatever you'd like to call it, use the same language and approach. Do not tell people to visit the church's website to use your online giving program, when the button says something different or does not provide proper instructions. This will confuse users.