



office@towerwebdesign.com

<http://www.towerwebdesign.com>

Developing Church Websites ~ Some Questions to Consider

1. What is **the purpose** of your site?

- Congregational communication and information?
- Evangelism and resources?
- Attracting newcomers to your community?

2. Who is your **primary audience**? There are three possible groups:

- those believers already members of your congregation
- believers not part of congregation - newcomers and visitors to church/community
- non-believers

3. What is **the message** you want to send about your church? What is of top priority to your congregation?

4. What is **the character of your congregation**?

- Contemporary, vibrant worship?
- Growing, many seekers?
- Traditional, long-standing history, dignified worship style?
- Combination, varied service styles?
- Mission oriented?
- Middle class? Upscale? Lower-income? A mix of people?
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5. Is the **current membership** made up mostly of:

- Young people and families?
- Technologically informed?
- Career-oriented people
- A high percentage of older folks who might need encouragement to use the site?
- A general variety of ages, social status?

6. What **program areas and ministries** do you want represented on your site? Which ones do you want to emphasize?

Some program areas you might want represented on your church's site:

- **Worship/Sermons:** regular and special services (times, locations), teen services, sermon texts or audios to download
- **Visitors:** welcome page, how to get to the church, statement of beliefs, get-acquainted help
- **Music program:** activities/choirs for adults, youth, children
- **Christian Education:** classes, study groups, mid-week programs
- **Fellowship:** small groups, special events, interest groups
- **Missions:** special interests of the congregation, service opportunities, charities supported
- **Particular ministries:** youth, seniors, mentally disabled, urban missions, singles, local community projects, and others
- **Staff/Leaders:** pastors, support staff, elders, trustees, deacons, teachers, group leaders
- **Calendars:** monthly, weekly, special events
- **Faith Resources:** Bible study helps, online materials, devotions, Christian faith resources & materials, gospel message, basic faith questions & answers
- **Links of interest:** denominational websites, other local churches, Christian vendors, community connections, relevant to programs
- **Intra-congregational contact:** Chat room, message boards/forums

Not every group needs a page of its own. A regularly maintained church site has a tendency to grow. You might wish to start out with some of the basic information about your church, and add more pages and sections as your vision for the website develops and your congregation becomes more familiar with it.

7. **What about photos of programs and events?** This is a question best addressed by your church leaders. Be aware that some parents might have concerns if you post online photos of children and teens. We suggest that your church leaders should establish a policy about photos of church events. It would be difficult to obtain specific permission from each parent of a child in a group photo, and there may be some parents in your congregation who would object to their child's photo put up on a webpage. In any case, children and teens should never be identified by full name.

8. A "**bare bones**" church site would probably include:

1. service details: times, places, is there care for young children during the service?
2. how to get there - directions and/or a map
3. how to contact the church: phone, email, address
4. what is the church about? what are its beliefs and denominational connection? does it have a mission statement?