



10 Ways to Maximize Church Attendance

Back to normal.

Throughout the country, churches of all sizes and denominations experience a bump in church attendance. Many congregations experience low attendance during summer months but as a new year begins, people want to get back into the rhythm of “normal” life after the crazy summertime pace. It is a time to establish good habits for a new season. Hopefully, many churches experience their regulars being regular again.

However, this isn't just a chance to hop back into the status quo of church attendance. Churches may also see brand new attenders, attenders looking to take their next step, and people looking for an opportunity to step up as leaders.

Ask yourself these questions:

- 1) *Are there any fringe attenders that we have been praying would become regular attenders?*
- 2) *Are there any regular attenders that we have been praying would become leaders?*
- 3) *Are there any new faces checking out our church for the very first time this year?*

If you answered “yes” to any or all of those three questions, then you must be intentional about investing in the people attending your church. In the USA, the period of growth generally starts in August and ends in early November. Your church has just a couple of months to leverage this period to boost church attendance. Time is of the essence.

Here are 10 ways to maximize church attendance:

1) Assess your facility

Have a friend that attends another church, or a fellow pastor visit your church—ideally on a Sunday, but even on a weekday can be beneficial. Ask them to be brutally honest. What's the first impression of the parking lot? What does the church smell like when you walk in the door (trust me, you've gone nose blind to it)? What major blemishes exist in the building, like carpet stains or warped ceiling tiles? Ideally, you should bring in an experienced Guide to assess your facility. However, any outside input you can get would give you some clarity on how to spend just a few dollars to make a significantly better impression. Very often the improvements are surprisingly inexpensive.

2) Identify first-time guests

You can't just *think* there are new faces at your church. You have to know. Not only that, but you have to know who they are. Think through the culture of your church and your philosophy of ministry but be intentional about identifying and [caring for first-time guests](#). Charge your greeters with the task of trying to find them. Ask ushers to be on the lookout. Invite first-time guests to an after-service meet-and-greet. Whatever it takes, be sure you see, recognize, and identify new guests.

3) Follow-up with first-time guests

Once you've identified first-time guests, the most critical step in maximizing new faces is to follow-up. You can [read this article](#) for step-by-step instructions on how to follow-up with guests. If you follow these tips, you will increase your guest retention. Most churches either have no formal follow-up process at all, or they follow it inconsistently. Have a guest follow-up system and stick to it relentlessly. Inconsistency is the enemy of success.

4) Level your leaders

If your church lacks a [leadership pipeline](#), you will not be able to fully maximize church attendance. People will fall through the cracks. Volunteers will burn out. There will be no structure for identifying, assessing, training, and launching leaders. Stratify your church leadership structure to allow for more oversight, mentorship, and recruiting at every level of ministry. If that sounds like a foreign language, you should **consider getting help**.

5) Expand community life

If you experienced a 20% increase this year, would you have enough space in small groups or classes if two-thirds of the newcomers wanted to join? Do you have enough small group leaders and hosts? Have you trained enough teachers for classes? Do you have a strategy for connecting newcomers into community life efforts? The best time to train new leaders for community life was last year. The second-best time is right now. Don't wait; if people feel like there is no room for them in small groups when they attend your church, they'll likely skip it.

6) Be socially strategic

Many people are afraid to go from going to church on a Sunday morning to attending a small group in a stranger's home. We often guilt people into joining groups without recognizing and affirming the social awkwardness of walking into someone's home and having to interact at the soul-level. Because of this, your church should be strategic about the kind of social or "fellowship" events you have. Use these events to funnel newcomers into less-formal, less-awkward relationships with group leaders. It will make it so much easier to transition into a home group.

7) Leverage your digital presence

How lonely is your church's Facebook page? Be honest. Do you post the same one or two posts a week? Do you interact with anyone? When did you last update the church website? [Click here for a simple guide](#) on how you can assess your digital presence. Now is also the time to be honest about your website. Is the information up-to-date? Does it need a facelift? Most newcomers start looking for a church online. So be sure your digital front door is ready for people who use the internet to find a church.

8) Be un-selfish

People are looking for a reason to doubt your church's authenticity. We live in a skeptical society, expecting the church to be hypocrites. If you want to show newcomers that you truly value the things you talk about on Sunday mornings, be sure you show it. One great way is to [do something for the community](#) that you won't necessarily get credit or recognition for. Many times, churches will do a community outreach event to gain notoriety or publicity. Do not do this. Be intentional about engaging in community work where you get to show and share the love of Jesus.

9) Cast vision

Where is your church going? What impact are you trying to make? What's the exciting future that your church is walking towards? Why would someone want to invest their time and money into the ministry of your church? Newcomers may or may not ask these questions out loud. But they should hear the answers to those questions when they're with you. Give people a reason to want to be involved in your church. Paint the picture for the future. If you're not sure what a good church vision looks like, you can [read this](#) or [this](#).

10) Follow through

Whatever you say you're going to do, do it. And do it with excellence. Each staff person and volunteer should follow through on their commitments. Pay attention to the small details. Don't cancel meetings unless there is a true emergency. Return phone calls. Answer emails. If you commit to [communicate weekly](#) via email with the church, don't miss a week. Be consistent. Your commitment to follow through on your promises will speak volumes to newcomers, fringe attenders, and regular attenders. Everyone will appreciate it, and it will go a long way in retaining many of those who come to see what your church is all about. Source: [10 Ways to Maximize Fall Church Attendance - The Malphurs Group](#)