



# THE GROWING NEED FOR ONLINE CAMPUS PASTORS

## THE NEED IS THE CALL

Recent events disrupted the way churches do ministry. Suddenly, reaching people with our message and keeping them connected to our community took on brand new meanings and demanded new mediums. Churches of every size now understand the immense value that technology affords us to continue doing ministry, even when separated by physical distance. Allowing technology to bring us closer to the people God called us to serve has revolutionized how we think about doing everything from evangelism and small groups to worship and prayer. Leaders who are quick to admit that they cannot do this without human resources dedicated to leveraging technology will future-proof their ministries.

Of course, when it comes to church ministry, using technology and digital tools like websites, social media platforms, and podcasts demands more than just technical skills. Engaging hearts and minds with your content is merely the first step in effective digital ministry. Assimilating and discipling the people who show up online requires spiritual leadership. Because the opportunities for reaching people online have never been greater, it will require churches to reconsider the types of roles they hire in the days ahead.

## UNLEASHING THE ONLINE CAMPUS PASTOR

Traditionally, by and large, and with few exceptions, pastors have a fairly straightforward path in pursuit of ministry. Today, churches will discover leaders to fill the role of the online campus pastor from a variety of backgrounds. Regardless of their pedigree, those who are qualified to step into the online campus pastor role will possess an intuitive understanding of technology and a proven track record of developing other leaders.

While the role of the online campus pastor was once a novel idea, churches today have never been more in need of leaders who can develop and establish their identity and presence online. Because the online campus pastor is first and foremost a spiritual leader, s/he assumes the charge to shepherd people in digital spaces. The online campus pastor role, therefore, requires someone who has embraced the call as a pastor and also has the skills of a technical expert.

*« In the hands of a spiritual leader, technology is a tool that will help your church amplify its message and accelerate its response. »*



# THREE ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF AN ONLINE CAMPUS PASTOR

More than just disseminating information and resources, an online campus pastor will:

## 01

### PREPARE FOR THE PEOPLE WHO SHOW UP AT YOUR DIGITAL FRONT DOOR

The online campus pastor will think about your digital platforms the same way you think about your home's curb appeal. Have you considered the impressions a guest will feel when they visit your website or social media page? Is it immediately evident which door you would like your visitors to enter through as they arrive? An online campus pastor will help clean out the clutter and clear a path so guests know exactly what step they should take next. Empowering an online campus pastor to align your design, look, and language across all your digital platforms is essential to their success. An online campus pastor will prepare your church to greet and welcome guests everyday as they enter your digital front door. Of course, converting people's interest into action goes beyond inviting them to subscribe and sign up for updates and relevant content.

## 02

### CARE FOR THE PEOPLE WHO SHOW UP IN YOUR DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS

Churches expend an enormous amount of time, energy, and resources creating environments to facilitate worship and connection. We do this because we understand the value of shared spaces. Ultimately, we know that the space we occupy shapes the sort of experience we have. Today, whether it is deciding on dinner or who to date, the digital space is influencing every minor and major life decision that people are making. In response, the online campus pastor cares for and journeys with the people that God sends through your digital front door. Creating digital but meaningful connection with people means treating every interaction as an opportunity for ministry. Social media actually affords something traditional broadcast media could not—a space for interaction and relationship. Online campus pastors see digital as an environment for engagement and not as a platform for promotion.

## 03

### SHARE COMPELLING DIGITAL CONTENT THAT'S EASY FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE.

Have you noticed how sometimes you will miss a friend's posts on social media? Unfortunately, organic (unpaid) reach only goes so far now. Today, we are inundated with ads from companies and sponsored posts from influencers, each of them vying for one thing—our ever-decreasing attention spans. An online campus pastor can help a church overcome all this inertia and stand out amid all the digital white noise. The one thing that has not changed is that people share the content they deem personally valuable. As a church, the "publish and pray" approach is akin to preparing a sermon without an audience in mind and hoping someone shows up to hear it. An online campus pastor starts by asking, "Who will be helped by this content?" They also make it easy for people to champion your causes by giving users the tools to promote, like, comment, and share your content.