

# How Churches and Their Members Use Social Media

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*Insights To Better Understand  
Your Audience*  
JULY 2010 ISSUE

## LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR...

Each month BuzzPlant conducts a survey to help its clients better understand the people they are trying to reach. This month, we are looking at how churches and their members use social media to connect.

Social media has created some very exciting opportunities for organizations to stay in touch with their supporters and members. Facebook, Twitter, and blog initiatives are being launched daily. But as you will see in this current survey, churches are still using “quill pens” in an Internet Age. With only 28% percent of churches posting a blog by their pastor, and only 25% using social media to promote their events. And this is not from lack of interest. The survey also showed that 68% of local church members would like to connect with their local leaders through blogging or other social media.

There has never been a better opportunity to connect with large numbers of people on a personal basis as is being offered the modern American church. With over 140 million people in a worship service weekly, the possibilities are staggering.

I hope you find this information both insightful and helpful. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to serve you.

Sincerely,

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	3
Major Findings.....	4
Church Study Demographics.....	5
Church Social Media Presences.....	6
Church Events and Social Media.....	8
Getting Feedback from Church Members.....	10
Churches and Facebook.....	11
Connecting with Small Groups.....	12
Church Leaders and Social Media.....	13
Church Online Content & Media.....	16

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of this study was to better understand how people of faith use social media today. We randomly surveyed people<sup>1</sup> across the country to gain insights into how they use social media today in their churches and to connect with other like-minded individuals.

Social media usage continues to increase and be a part of people's daily lives. According to Facebook.com<sup>2</sup>, they have more than 400 million active users. Facebook says that 50% of their active users log on to their site any given day and people spend over 500 billion minutes per month on their site. In addition, other social media sites like Twitter.com have over 100 million users<sup>3</sup>.

With so many people using social media today, we posed the question "How do people of faith use social media?" We asked questions like "Does your church have a social media presence?" and "How does your church use Facebook?" Our findings are provided in this report.

We believe this information will be helpful to churches, businesses and individuals looking to improve their communication with people of faith and help them to improve how they reach out to the faith-based market.

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<sup>1</sup> We had 432 people opt in to participate in this study.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>

<sup>3</sup>

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/infotech/internet/Twitter-snags-over-100-million-users-eyes-money-making/articleshow/5808927.cms>

## MAJOR FINDINGS

The following is a summary of some of our findings:

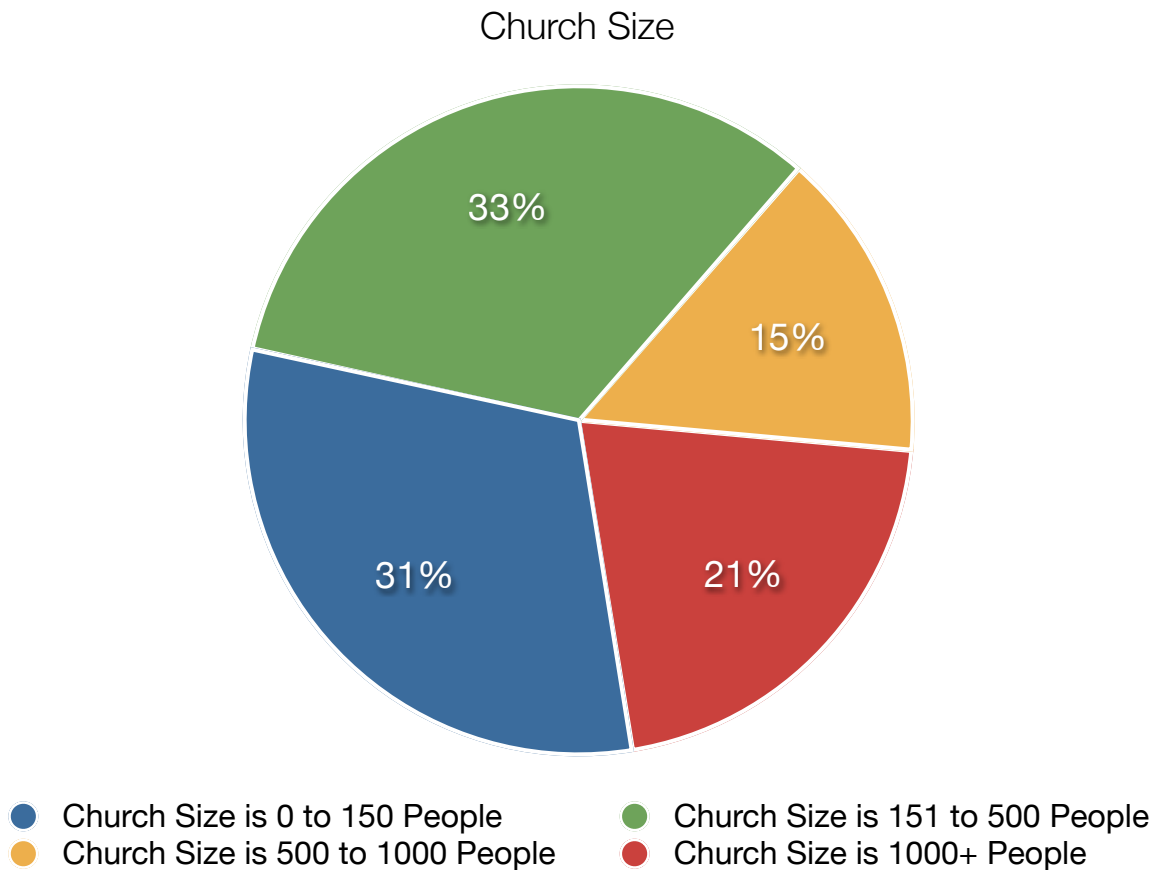
- **Churches are using social media on some level, especially Facebook.** Over half of the people in our study attend churches who are using social media at some level. The majority of those churches who do use social media utilize Facebook over other sites.
- **The bigger the church, the more likely they are to be using social media.** Churches with larger attendances (1000 people or more) showed they are more likely to utilize social media than those with small attendance (under 150 people).
- **Social media isn't the most used resources for church events.** When it comes to events, churches are still divided in their use of social media. Only 25% said they always use social media for events and about a third of people said it depends on the type of event. Again, larger churches are more likely to use social media for events than smaller churches.
- **Churches currently do not rely on social media to get feedback from members.** Two-thirds of people in this study said that their churches do *not* utilize social media for getting feedback from their members.
- **Personal connections on Facebook are important between church members.** Churches are split almost 50/50 on if they have a presences on Facebook. Even those who do not have a Facebook page for their church indicated that the most popular way Facebook is used by churches is through friend connections between members.
- **Social media usage for small groups and Bible studies is still growing.** Two-thirds of the people surveyed are in some sort of small group or Bible study, but of these people nearly 50% said their group does not utilize social media to communicate.
- **Pastors & church leaders have an opportunity to using blogging & social media as a means to reach people.** Only about one fourth of respondents have a pastor who blogs. However, 50% of people who took our survey follow other church leaders on social media and almost three-fourths of respondents showed a desire to connect with church leaders via social media.
- **Online media & podcast are utilized by some churches, but there is room for growth.** Churches are also split almost 50/50 in their use of online media and podcasts in church sermons.

The above is just a sample of our findings. Additional details and statistics can be found in the remaining pages of this report.

# CHURCH STUDY DEMOGRAPHICS

## Church Size Factor

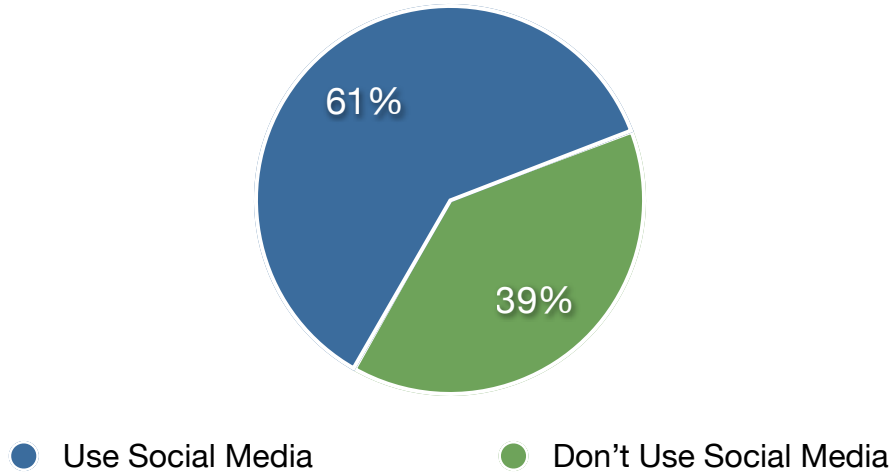
As we looked to see how people of faith use social media, we also looked to see if the size of a church had any impact on how those people use social media. We analyze this data further when appropriate in our findings. In addition, the following chart displays the percentage of respondents who attend each size of church.



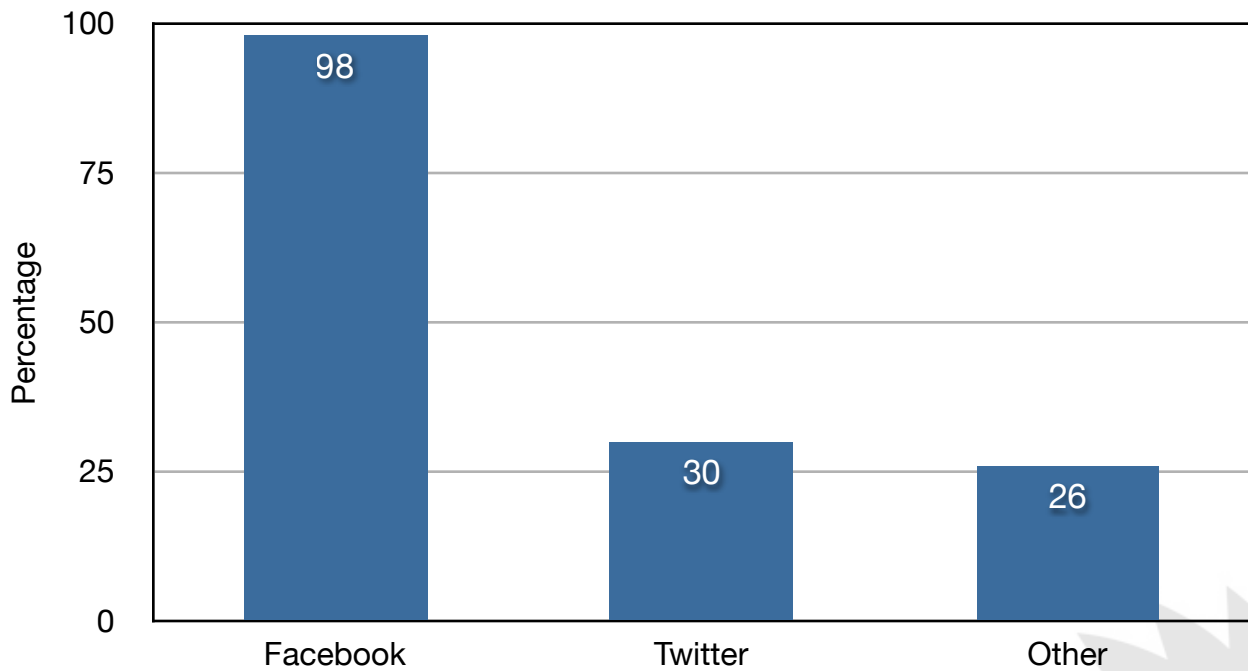
# CHURCH SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCES

## Churches On Social Media Sites

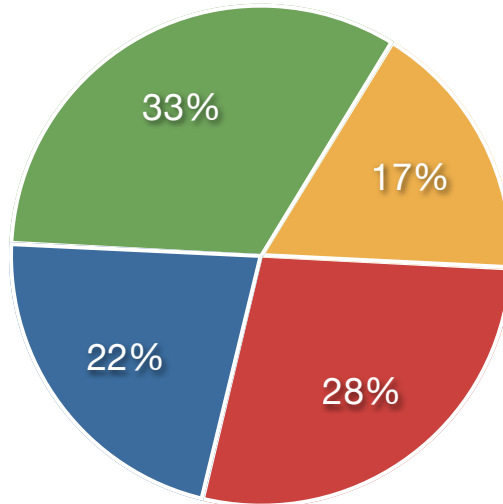
Do Churches Use Social Media?



Social Media Sites Used by Churches

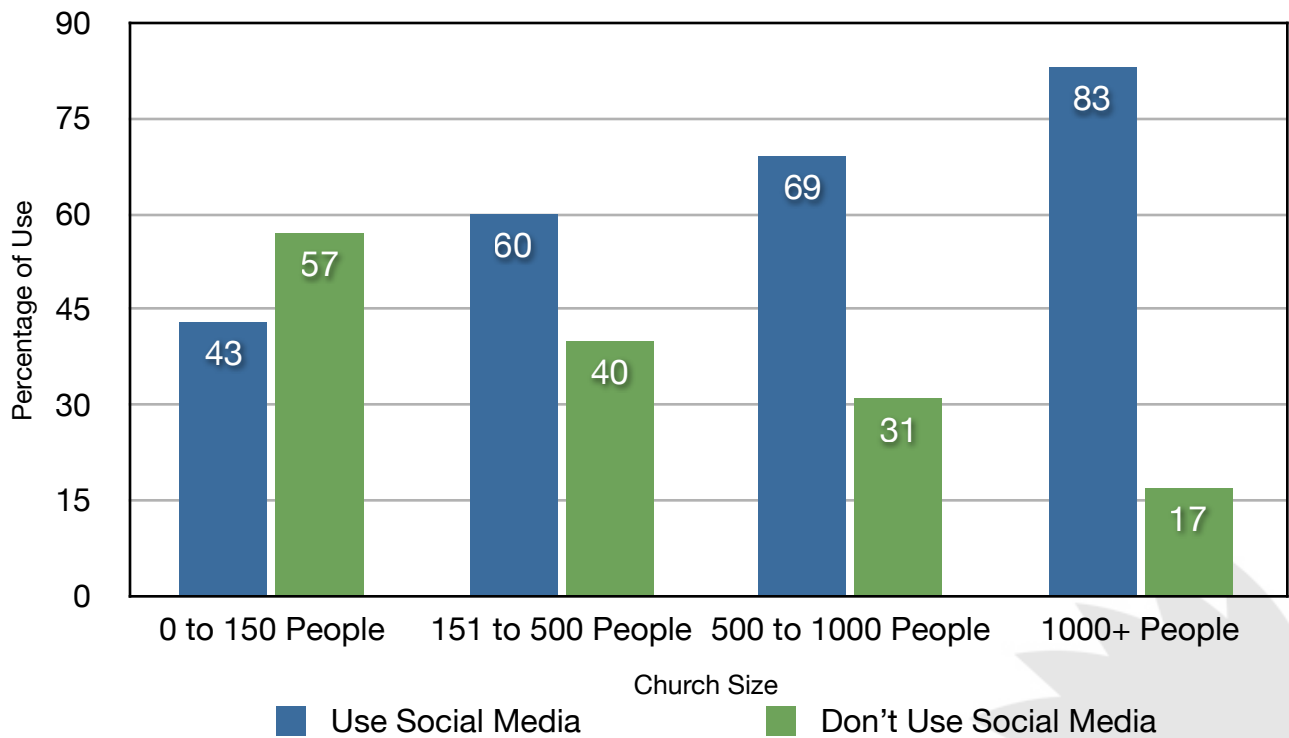


### Church Size Comparison Of Those Using Social Media



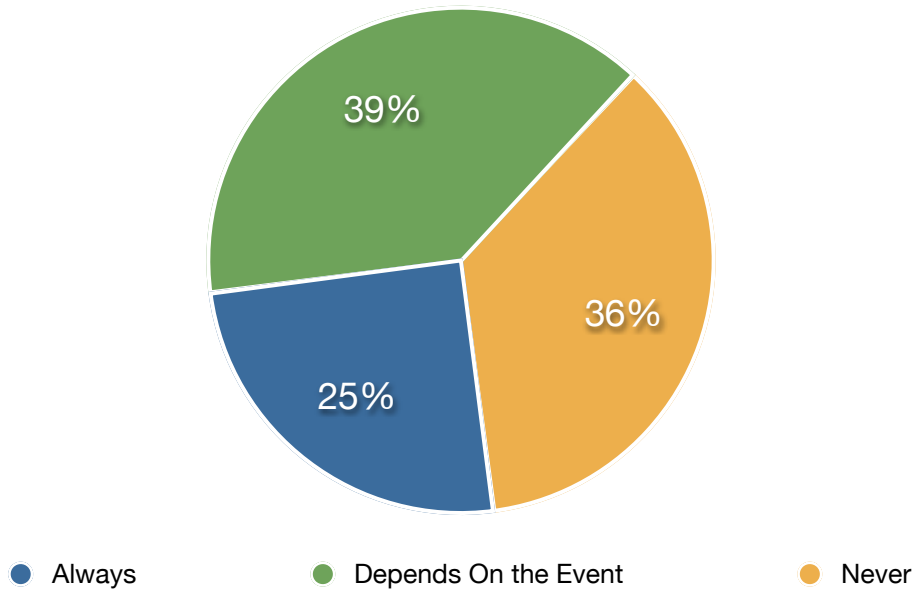
- Church Size is 0 to 150 People
- Church Size is 151 to 500 People
- Church Size is 500 to 1000 People
- Church Size is 1000+ People

### Overall Social Media Use Based on Church Size

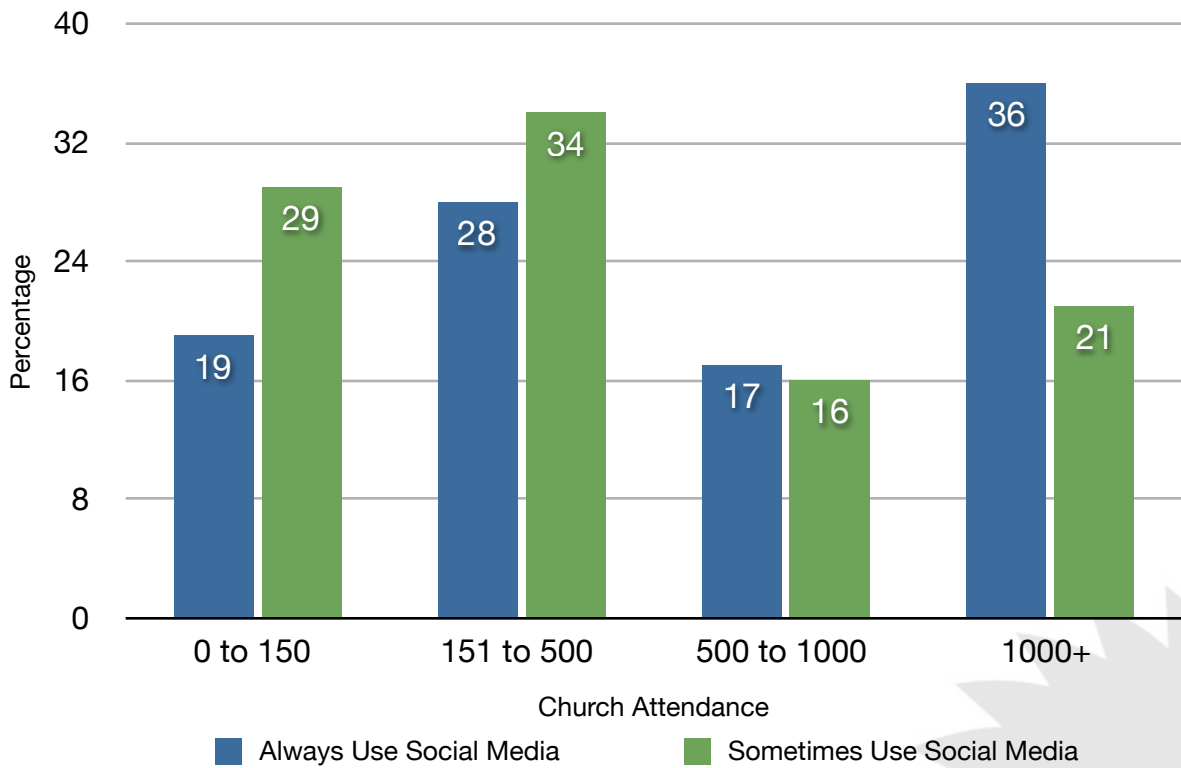




### How Often Do Churches Use Social Media to Promote These Events?

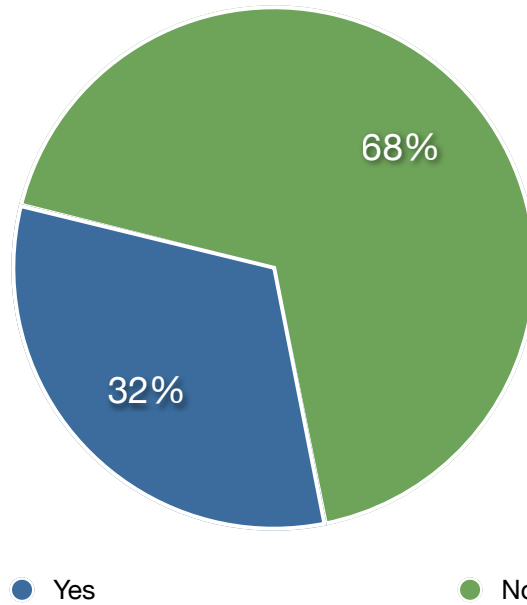


### Size Of Churches Who Indicated Use of Social Media for Events

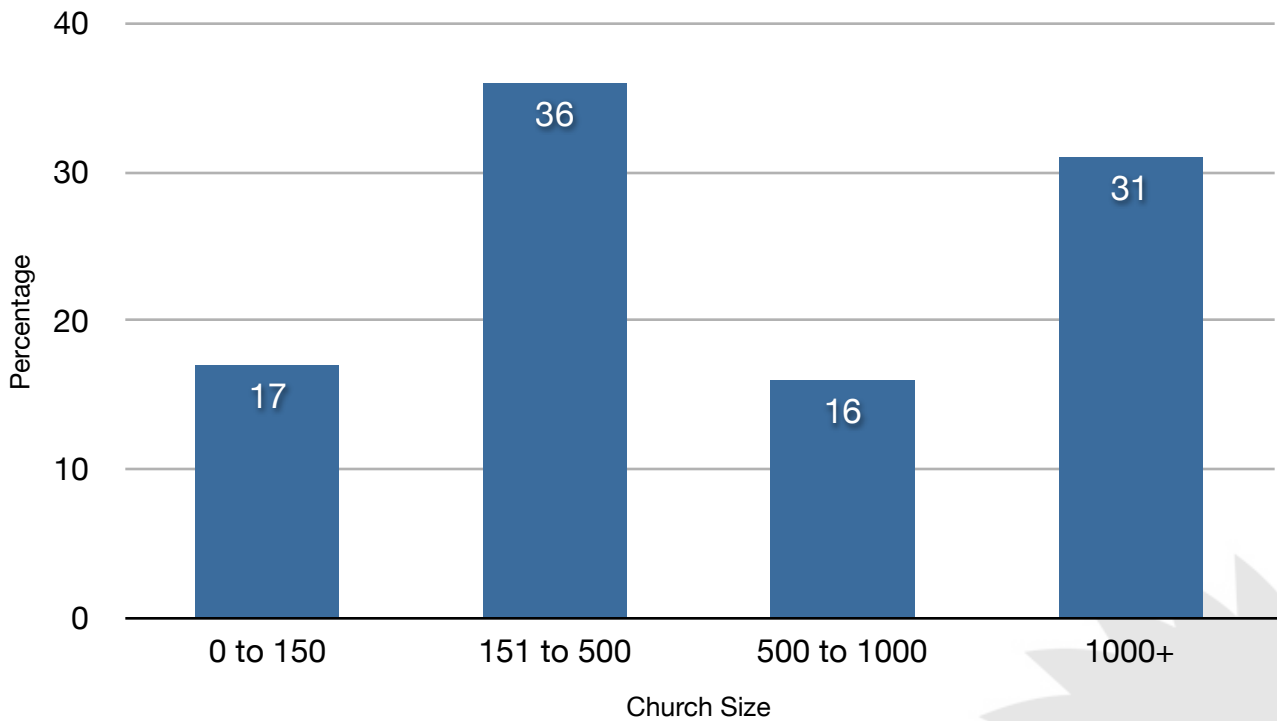


# GETTING FEEDBACK FROM CHURCH MEMBERS

Do Churches Use Social Media To Get Feedback From Members?

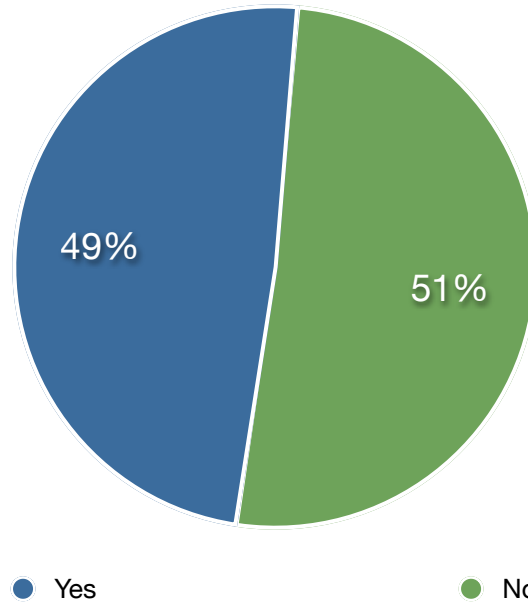


Size of Churches Who Use Social Media to Obtain Feedback

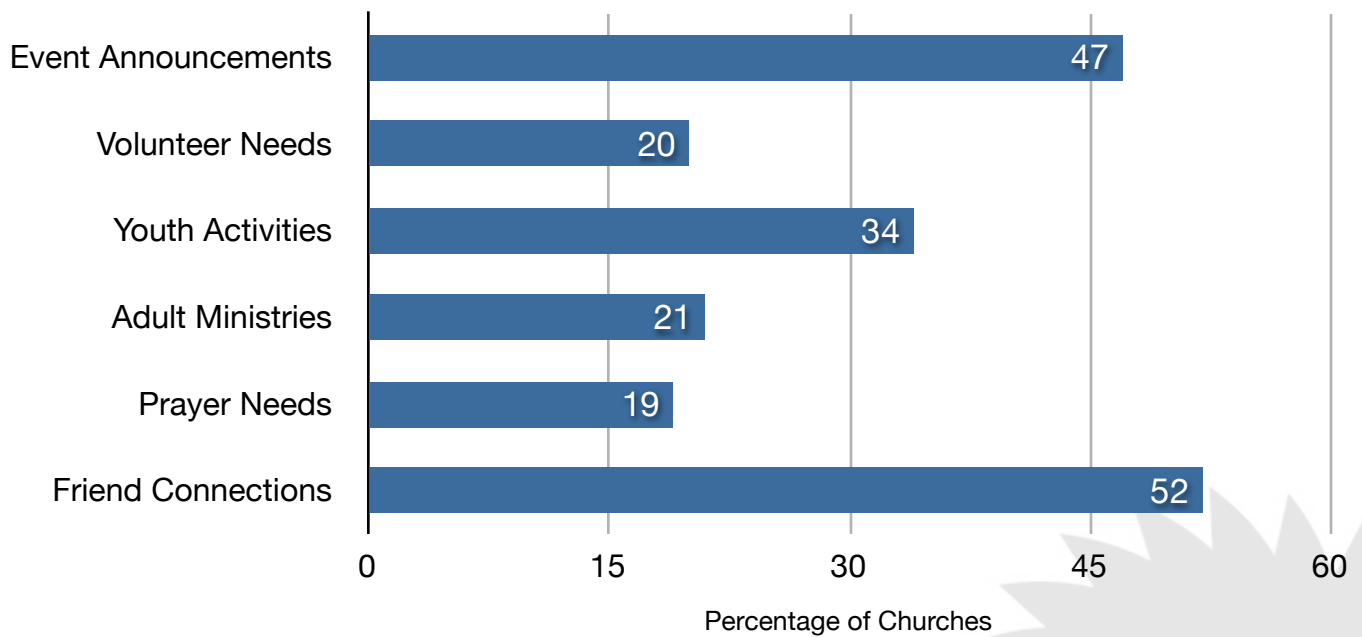


# CHURCHES AND FACEBOOK

Does Your Church Have a Facebook Page or Group?

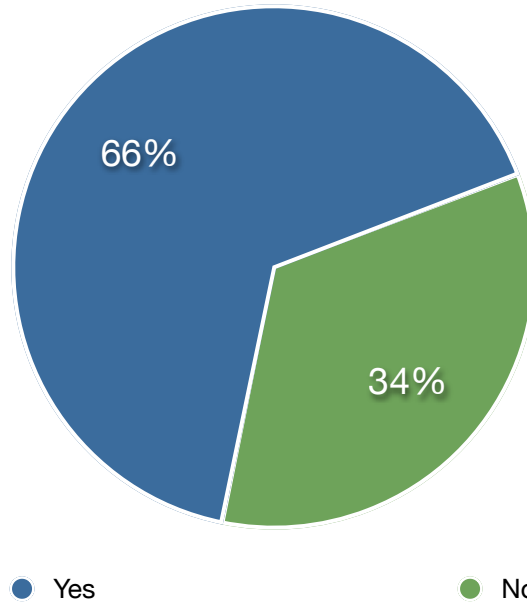


Additional Ways Churches Use Facebook

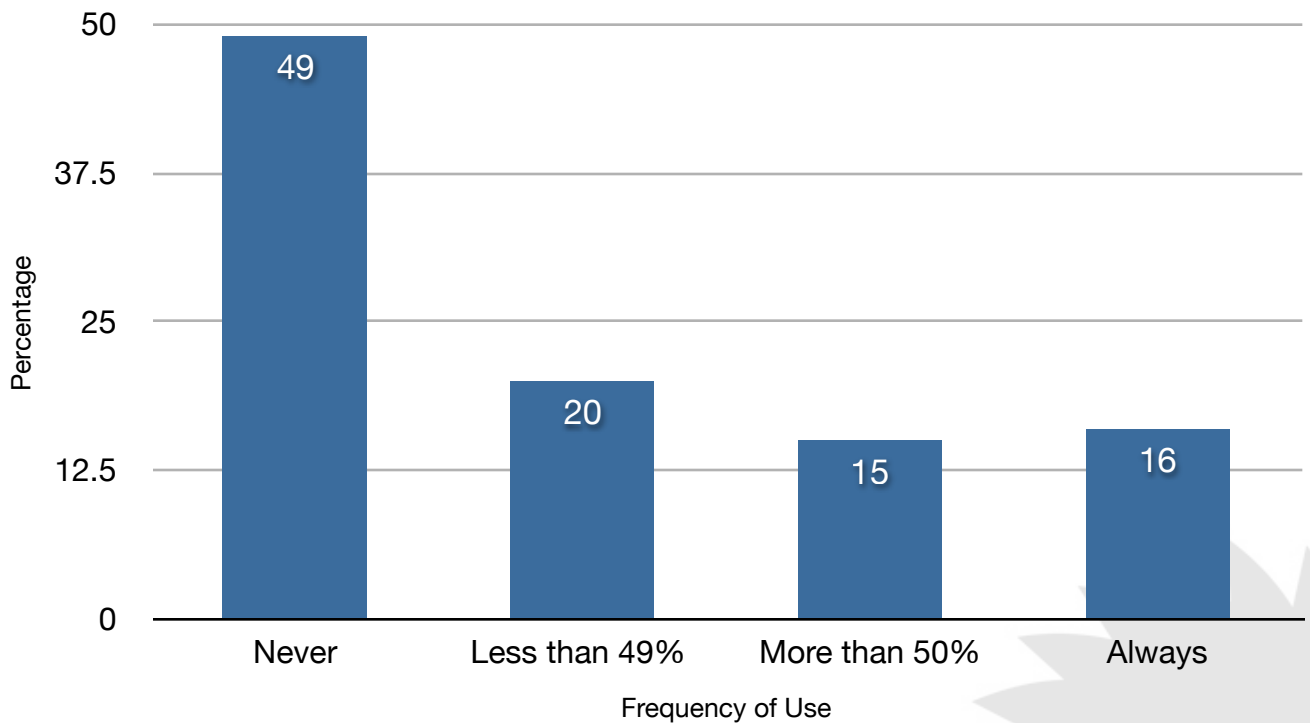


# CONNECTING WITH SMALL GROUPS

Are You Part of a Small Group or Bible Study?

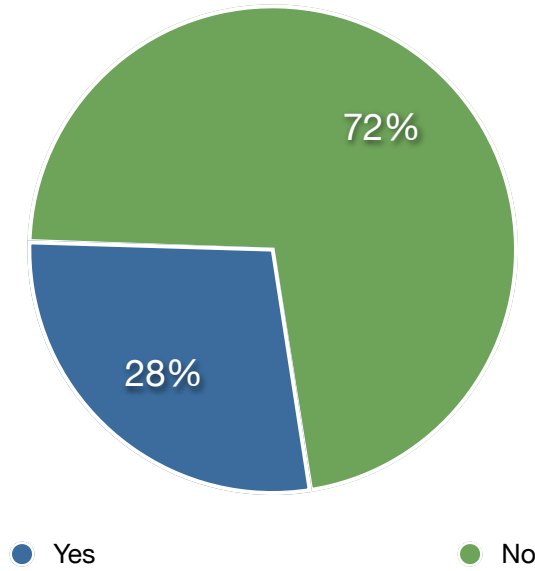


How Often Do People in Small Groups Use Social Media to Communicate?

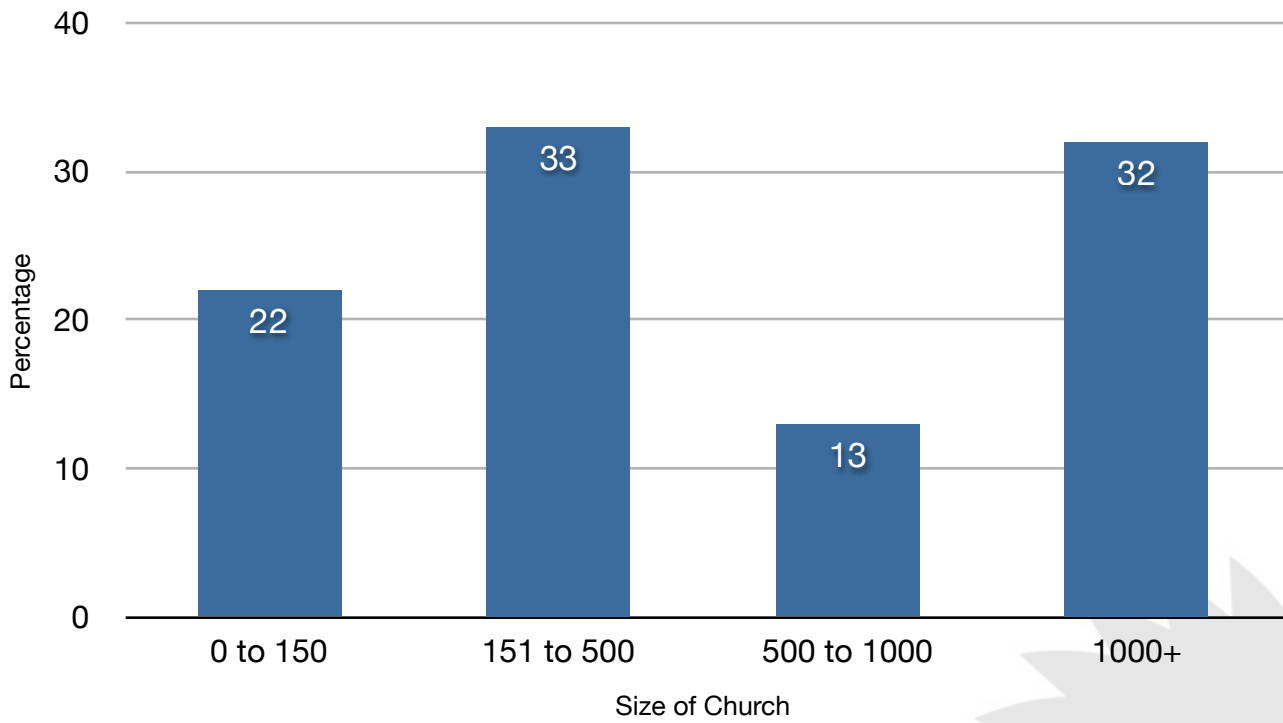


# CHURCH LEADERS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

### Does Your Pastor Have a Blog?



### Size of Churches With a Pastor Who Blogs

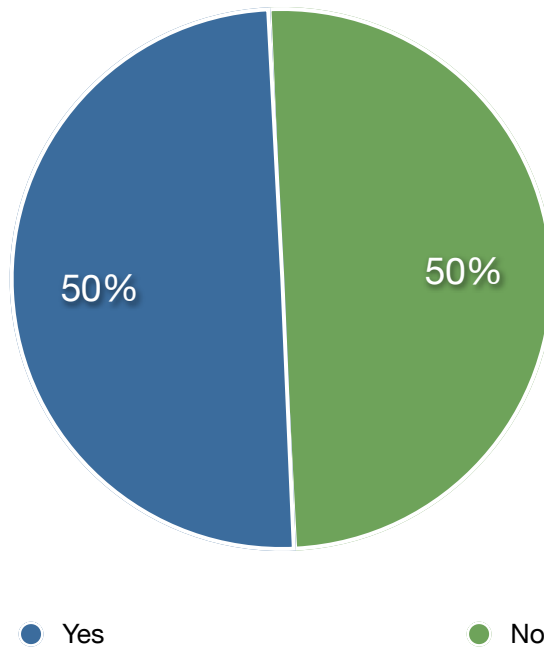


We then asked if participants followed other church leaders on social media sites and if they'd like to connect with other church leaders on social media. According to google ranking, the top five church leaders who blog are:

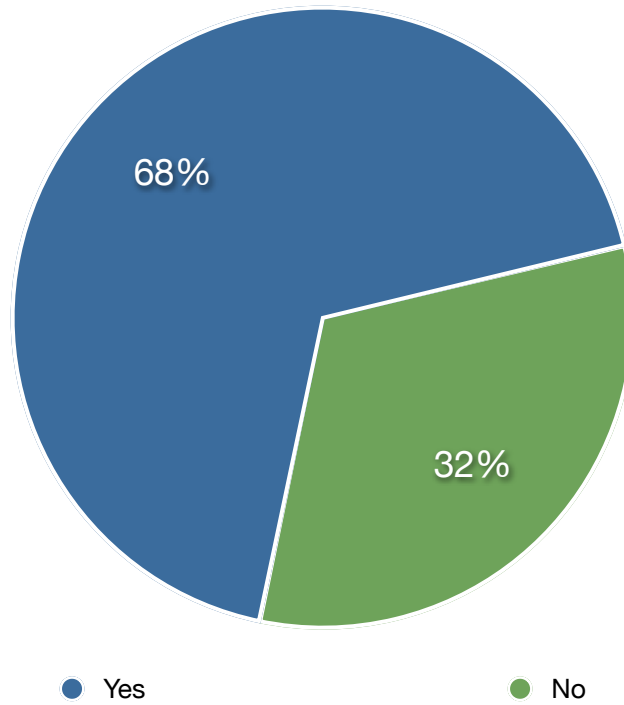
John Piper - <http://www.desiringgod.org/Blog/>  
Brian McClaren - <http://www.brianmclaren.net>  
Perry Noble - <http://www.perrynoble.com/>  
Mark Roberts - <http://markdroberts.com/>  
Mark Beeson - <http://www.markbeeson.com/>

The graphs below show the answers we got to these questions.

### Do You Follow Other Church Leaders on Social Media?

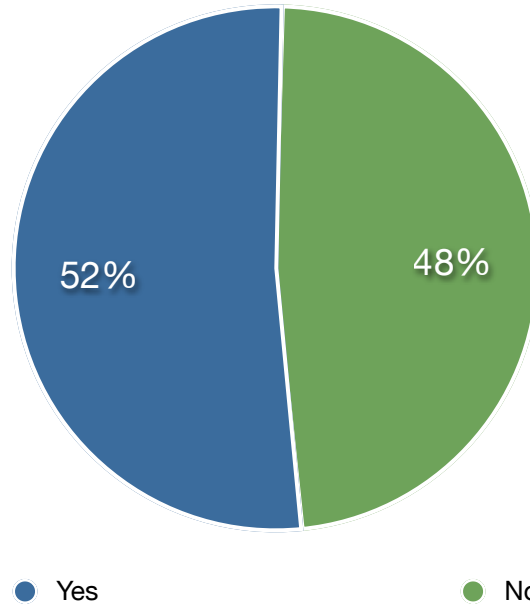


## Would You Follow Other Church Leaders If You Knew How To Connect With Them?



# CHURCH ONLINE CONTENT & MEDIA

Do Churches Broadcast Sermons Online or Have Podcasts?



How Often Is Video Media Used in Sermons?

