



**Technology and the Church:
Discipleship in the Digital Age**

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**The House of God Church, Inc.
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Before we begin, we must first identify the tools that we will use in order to lay the foundation, erect the walls, place on the roof and fortify the structure for the inhabiting of this conversation.

The initial question for this segment should be: What is technology and how can it be used to edify the church?

1. Live Streaming and Online Services:

* **Description:** Utilizing platforms like Facebook, YouTube, or Instagram to stream your church services/ gatherings, Bible studies, and special events. This allows members who cannot attend in person to stay connected to the vision of the house and it also reaches a broader audience that we may fulfill the discipleship commission written in Luke 14:23, “And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.”

* **Implementation:** Announce the live streaming schedule on all your social media platforms. Encourage members, department representatives and most importantly the youth to share the live stream with their friends and family. Engage with viewers by responding to comments and questions in real-time. Romans 10:14 says, “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”

2. Community Outreach Highlights:

* **Description:** Share stories, photos, and videos of your church's community outreach efforts. This could include feeding the homeless, school supply drives, or any acts of kindness and service.

* **Implementation:** Create posts that highlight the impact of these activities. Use hashtags relevant to your community and church. Encourage members to share their own experiences and testimonies related to these outreach efforts. This not only showcases the church's involvement but also inspires others to participate.

3. Interactive and Educational Content:

* **Description:** Post content that educates and engages your audience. This could include daily Bible verses, short devotionals, Q&A sessions with pastors, or discussions on relevant social issues from a biblical perspective. Is it not written in Habakkuk 2:2, “And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.”

* **Implementation:** Schedule regular posts that provide spiritual nourishment and encourage interaction. For example, you could have a weekly “Ask the Pastor” session where followers submit questions, and the pastor answers them live or pre-recorded. Use polls, quizzes, and interactive stories to make the content engaging and shareable.

By implementing these strategies, churches can maintain their role as a beacon of hope and morality while effectively engaging with the broader community through social media.

4. Community Service and Outreach Programs:

* **Description:** Develop and implement community service projects that address the specific needs of your local area. This could include food drives, clothing donations, free health clinics, or educational programs like GED classes or resume workshops.

* **Implementation:** Start by assessing the needs of your community through surveys or meetings with local leaders. Organize regular events and encourage church members to volunteer. Partner with local organizations and businesses to expand your reach and resources. Promote these events through social media, local newspapers, and community bulletin boards.

* **Biblical Basis:** Galatians 6:9-10 encourages doing good to all people, especially those in the household of faith. Acts of service demonstrate the love of Christ and can draw people to the church.

5. Engaging and Relevant Worship Services:

* **Description:** Create worship services that are both spiritually enriching and relevant to the lives of the community members. This includes dynamic preaching, contemporary worship music, and practical applications of biblical teachings.

* **Implementation:** Regularly seek feedback from your congregation to understand what resonates with them. Incorporate testimonies, multimedia presentations, and interactive elements into your services. Offer different service times to accommodate various schedules. Ensure that your church is welcoming and inclusive, with greeters and follow-up teams to connect with visitors.

* **Biblical Basis:** Hebrews 10:24-25 emphasizes the importance of gathering together to encourage one another. Engaging worship services can inspire and uplift attendees, making them more likely to invite others.

6. Small Groups and Discipleship Programs:

* **Description:** Develop small groups and discipleship programs that foster deeper relationships and spiritual growth. These groups can focus on Bible study, prayer, specific life stages (e.g., young adults, parents), or common interests (e.g., sports, arts).

* **Implementation:** Train leaders to facilitate these groups and provide them with resources and support. Promote the groups through church announcements, social media, and personal invitations. Encourage members to invite friends and neighbors to join. Regularly evaluate and adjust the groups to meet the evolving needs of the participants.

* **Biblical Basis:** Acts 2:42-47 describes the early church meeting in small groups, sharing life together, and growing in faith. Small groups can create a sense of belonging and accountability, helping members to grow spiritually and relationally.

By implementing these strategies, churches can effectively grow their presence and impact in the community, drawing people closer to Christ and fostering a strong, supportive church family.

Phase II a:

What is discipleship?????

Discipleship is a fundamental concept in Christianity that involves the process of following Jesus Christ, growing in faith, and helping others to do the same. It is both a personal journey of spiritual growth and a communal effort to spread the teachings of Jesus. Here are some key aspects of discipleship:

1. Following Jesus:

* **Description:** At its core, discipleship means being a follower of Jesus Christ. This involves committing to live according to His teachings and example.

* **Biblical Basis:** Jesus called His first disciples with the words, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). Following Jesus means prioritizing His will and commands in every aspect of life.

2. Spiritual Growth:

* **Description:** Discipleship involves a continuous process of spiritual growth and transformation. This includes studying the Bible, prayer, worship, and practicing spiritual disciplines.

* **Biblical Basis:** 2 Peter 3:18 encourages believers to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Discipleship is about becoming more like Christ in character and actions.

3. Teaching and Learning:

* **Description:** Discipleship is both about being taught and teaching others. It involves learning from more mature Christians and passing on that knowledge to others.

* **Biblical Basis:** In the Great Commission, Jesus instructed His followers to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). This highlights the importance of teaching in discipleship.

4. Community and Fellowship:

* **Description:** Discipleship often takes place within the context of a community of believers. Fellowship with other Christians provides support, accountability, and encouragement.

* **Biblical Basis:** Acts 2:42 describes the early church: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Community is essential for mutual growth and support in discipleship.

5. Service and Mission:

* **Description:** Discipleship involves serving others and participating in the mission of the church to spread the gospel. This includes acts of kindness, evangelism, and social justice.

* **Biblical Basis:** Jesus said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Discipleship means following Jesus' example of service and mission.

6. Obedience and Commitment:

* **Description:** Discipleship requires a commitment to obey Jesus' commands and live according to His teachings, even when it is difficult.

* **Biblical Basis:** Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commands" (John 14:15). Obedience is a key aspect of being a disciple.

7. Mentorship and Multiplication:

* **Description:** Discipleship involves mentoring others and helping them to grow in their faith. This creates a multiplying effect, as those who are discipled go on to disciple others.

* **Biblical Basis:** Paul instructed Timothy, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2). This highlights the importance of mentorship and multiplication in discipleship.

Practical Steps for Discipleship:

1. **Personal Devotion:** Spend regular time in prayer, Bible study, and worship to grow closer to God.
2. **Join a Small Group:** Participate in a small group or Bible study to learn and grow with others.
3. **Serve in the Church:** Get involved in serving within your church community.
4. **Mentor Others:** Find opportunities to mentor and disciple others in their faith journey.
5. **Live Out Your Faith:** Apply biblical principles in your daily life and be a witness to others through your actions and words.

Discipleship is a lifelong journey of following Jesus, growing in faith, and helping others to do the same. It is central to the Christian life and mission.

Phase II b:

Certainly! The integration of technology into church activities can significantly enhance discipleship efforts in the digital age. Here are some strategies and considerations for leveraging technology to foster discipleship:

1. Online Bible Studies and Small Groups:

* **Description:** Utilize video conferencing tools like Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams to host virtual Bible studies and small group meetings. This allows members to connect and grow spiritually, regardless of their physical location.

* **Implementation:** Schedule regular online meetings and promote them through your church's website, social media, and email newsletters. Provide digital study materials and encourage interactive discussions. Record sessions for those who cannot attend live.

* **Biblical Basis:** Matthew 18:20 states, "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." Technology enables believers to gather and grow together, even when they are apart.

2. Digital Discipleship Resources:

* **Description:** Create and distribute digital resources such as e-books, podcasts, video sermons, and devotionals. These resources can be accessed anytime, providing continuous spiritual nourishment.

* **Implementation:** Develop a content calendar and regularly produce high-quality digital materials. Use platforms like YouTube, Spotify, and your church's website to distribute content. Encourage members to share these resources with their networks.

* **Biblical Basis:** 2 Timothy 3:16-17 emphasizes the importance of Scripture for teaching and equipping believers. Digital resources can make biblical teachings more accessible and engaging.

3. Social Media Engagement:

* **Description:** Use social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok to share inspirational content, church updates, and interactive posts. Social media can be a powerful tool for outreach and engagement.

* **Implementation:** Create a social media strategy that includes regular posts, live streams, and interactive content such as polls, Q&A sessions, and challenges. Encourage church members to engage with and share the content. Use hashtags and collaborate with other Christian influencers to expand your reach.

* **Biblical Basis:** Acts 1:8 calls believers to be witnesses "to the ends of the earth." Social media provides a platform to share the gospel and connect with people globally.

4. Church Apps and Online Platforms:

- * **Description:** Develop a church app or use existing platforms to provide a centralized location for sermons, event information, prayer requests, and giving. Apps can enhance communication and engagement within the church community.
- * **Implementation:** Invest in a church app or use platforms like Church Online Platform, Subsplash, or Pushpay. Ensure the app is user-friendly and regularly updated with fresh content. Promote the app through all church communication channels.
- * **Biblical Basis:** Hebrews 10:24-25 encourages believers to meet together and encourage one another. A church app can facilitate ongoing connection and support among members.

5. Virtual Mentorship and Counseling:

- * **Description:** Offer virtual mentorship and counseling sessions to provide spiritual guidance and support. This can be particularly beneficial for members who are unable to attend in-person meetings.
- * **Implementation:** Train church leaders and volunteers to use video conferencing tools for one-on-one or small group mentorship. Promote these services through your church's communication channels and ensure confidentiality and professionalism.
- * **Biblical Basis:** Proverbs 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Virtual mentorship allows for personal growth and accountability, even from a distance.

6. Interactive Online Courses and Workshops:

- * **Description:** Develop online courses and workshops on various topics such as theology, Christian living, and leadership. These can be self-paced or live sessions, providing flexible learning opportunities.
- * **Implementation:** Use platforms like Teachable, Udemy, or your church's website to host courses. Offer a mix of free and paid content to cater to different needs. Provide certificates of completion to encourage participation.
- * **Biblical Basis:** 2 Peter 3:18 encourages believers to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Online courses can facilitate continuous learning and spiritual growth.

By embracing technology, churches can enhance their discipleship efforts, making spiritual growth and community engagement more accessible and effective in the digital age.

Phase III a:

What is the digital age?

The digital age, also known as the information age or the computer age, refers to the current era characterized by the widespread use of digital technology and the internet. This period has transformed how people communicate, access information, and interact with the world. Here are some key features and implications of the digital age:

Key Features of the Digital Age:

1. Internet Connectivity:

* **Description:** The internet has become a global network that connects billions of devices and people, enabling instant communication and access to vast amounts of information.

* **Impact:** The internet has revolutionized how we work, learn, shop, and socialize. It has made information more accessible and has facilitated global communication and collaboration.

2. Digital Devices:

* **Description:** The proliferation of digital devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, and smartwatches has made technology an integral part of daily life.

* **Impact:** These devices have changed how we consume media, stay connected, and manage our lives. They have also enabled the rise of social media, mobile apps, and other digital services.

3. Social Media:

* **Description:** Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have become central to how people share information, connect with others, and express themselves.

* **Impact:** Social media has transformed communication, marketing, and even politics. It has created new opportunities for community building and outreach but also poses challenges related to privacy, misinformation, and mental health.

4. Cloud Computing:

* Description: Cloud computing allows for the storage and processing of data on remote servers accessed via the internet, rather than on local devices.

* Impact: This technology has enabled scalable and flexible computing resources, making it easier for businesses and individuals to store data, run applications, and collaborate online.

5. Big Data and Analytics:

* Description: The digital age has seen an explosion of data generated by digital devices and online activities. Big data analytics involves processing and analyzing this data to gain insights and make informed decisions.

* Impact: Big data has transformed industries such as healthcare, finance, marketing, and more. It allows for personalized experiences, predictive analytics, and improved decision-making.

6. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning:

* Description: AI and machine learning technologies enable computers to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as recognizing speech, making decisions, and learning from data.

* Impact: AI is being used in various applications, from virtual assistants like Siri and Alexa to autonomous vehicles and advanced medical diagnostics. It has the potential to revolutionize many aspects of life and work.

7. E-commerce and Digital Payments:

* Description: The rise of online shopping and digital payment systems has transformed the retail industry and how people conduct financial transactions.

* Impact: E-commerce platforms like Amazon and digital payment services like PayPal and Venmo have made shopping and financial transactions more convenient and accessible.

Phase III b:

Implications for the Church:

1. Online Worship and Community:

* **Description:** Churches can use digital platforms to stream services, host virtual Bible studies, and create online communities.

* **Impact:** This allows for greater reach and accessibility, enabling people to participate in church activities regardless of their location.

2. Digital Evangelism:

* **Description:** The internet provides opportunities for sharing the gospel through websites, social media, podcasts, and online videos.

* **Impact:** Digital evangelism can reach a global audience and engage people who might not attend a physical church.

3. Resource Distribution:

* **Description:** Churches can distribute digital resources such as e-books, devotionals, and sermon recordings.

* **Impact:** This makes spiritual resources more accessible and allows for continuous engagement with church members.

4. Community Engagement:

* **Description:** Social media and digital communication tools can be used to engage with the community, share updates, and organize events.

* **Impact:** This fosters a sense of community and keeps members informed and connected.

5. Online Giving:

* **Description:** Digital payment systems enable online tithing and donations.

* **Impact:** This provides a convenient way for members to support the church financially, even if they cannot attend in person.

Challenges and Considerations:

1. Digital Divide:

* **Description:** Not everyone has equal access to digital technology and the internet.

* **Impact:** Churches need to consider how to include and support members who may lack access to digital resources.

2. Privacy and Security:

* **Description:** The digital age raises concerns about data privacy and cybersecurity.

* **Impact:** Churches must ensure that they protect the personal information of their members and use secure platforms for online activities.

3. Balancing Digital and In-Person Interaction:

* **Description:** While digital tools are valuable, they should complement rather than replace in-person fellowship and worship.

* **Impact:** Churches need to find a balance that leverages digital technology while maintaining the importance of physical community.

By understanding and embracing the digital age, churches, organizations and each of us can enhance their discipleship efforts, reach a broader audience, and effectively engage with their communities.

