How to Launch Your Christian Podcast

Quickly and Efficiently

A Guide for Churches, Ministries, Authors, and Christian Entrepreneurs

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PRESENTS

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You may have listened to a podcast or two or just simply heard about podcasting, but how do you start podcasting yourself? Especially if you are a Christian or interested in launching a Christian Podcast? Podcasting isn't the most difficult thing to do, but it can be challenging to become a successful podcaster. Many people, when they start a podcast, want to be so general that anyone will want to listen. But the reality is, that does not appeal to anyone!

It takes a lot of time and hard work to start, run and have a successful podcast. But for those that do have a successful podcast, they are targeting a very specific audience.

This guide is here to get you started in the correct direction. If you follow these steps, you can start your Christian podcast on the right track. If you do not have a Christian themed podcast, the same principles will work for you as well. But all of the terminology, etc. in this guide is targeting Christian podcasters (or those who want to have a Christian podcast).

Figure Out What Your Podcast Is About

Before you even start recording, you must figure out what it is you want to talk about. What do you want your podcast to accomplish? It should be something relatively specific. More importantly, it should be something that you are passionate about.

If you are passionate about sharing your Faith, podcasting can help.
If you are passionate about interviewing other Christians (maybe those who have overcome some type of adversity and you can help them to share their stories with the world), podcasting can help.
If you are passionate about interviewing Christian influencers (pastors, authors and other ministry or non-profit leaders) and helping them to promote their ministry or book, podcasting can help.
If you are passionate about sharing resources with others who are hurting and do not know where to turn for assistance (suicide, addictions, abuse, etc.), podcasting can help.

And these are just a few examples!

If you plan on making the effort to enter podcasting, for whatever reason, you might as well try to enjoy it as much as you can. Your podcast should absolutely fill a need. If you are not filling a need and helping someone to solve a problem, you are just another fish in the sea. You appear to be offering nothing particularly interesting that would draw people to you.

For example, you could make a podcast about "Bible Study," but there are thousands of podcasts like that. It will be very hard for you to be discovered in this niche with such a general term. You will need to be more specific. Drill down. Instead of a general "Bible Study" podcast, maybe focus on "Prophecy." You could discuss current events and relate them to Bible

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Prophecy. You could interview other Bible Prophecy experts. You could discuss books on Bible Prophecy and monetize your podcast by providing links through Amazon (and Amazon will pay you an affiliate commission for people that buy the book through your link). This was just one example. There are many more areas that would help you to stand out from the normal "Bible Study Podcast."

You can take this concept and apply it to any topic. The more specific you are, the more you will stand out and the more loyal your audience will be. You could do a podcast on sermon preparation; Biblical research; Bible History; Characters in the Bible, etc. The ideas are endless.

But the point I want to emphasize is this: ***"You must be different"*** from everyone else.

Plan Your Podcasting Schedule

To be successful in podcasting, you will need to consistently upload new episodes. You cannot develop a loyal audience if they do not know when to expect a new episode from your podcast.

Podcasting is going to consume a huge block of your time, even if you only publish one episode per week. Do not bite off more than you can chew (at least when you are first starting out).

I recommend you create a strict schedule for yourself that your followers can rely on. Depending on how often you plan on uploading your show, you need to set at least one day each week (for a weekly podcast) where you will record your episodes (no matter what). If you are conducting interviews, it easier for you to tell someone "I record my interviews on Wednesday between 5-9 pm" rather than say "What works for you?"

Personally, I use a scheduler to handle my interview calendar. I do several interviews each week. The scheduler I use will synch with my personal calendar so I am not double booked between other interviews and my personal schedule. If you are just starting out, you probably do not need to use a scheduler service like this. You can coordinate personally with each potential interviewee. But once your schedule starts filling up, consider a scheduler service to help streamline your process.

You should also have a separate day each week where you will upload the podcast to your podcast hosting platform. Having a strict publication date helps you stay on schedule and to be consistent in what you are doing. This helps you to develop a loyal listening audience.

Some people will record all of their episodes in one day (or two) for the entire month. If you are publishing a weekly podcast, that is only four or five episodes. That can easily be accomplished over two days with very little disruption to your personal schedule. You could then edit your episodes on another day and then a third day, upload them all to your hosting platform. Now, your entire month is finished in just three days of work!

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Many podcasters will record all of their podcasts on one day, edit the next and load the third day. Some will record one day, edit and upload the next (so they are finished in two days). Yet others will only do one day per week. You must pick a schedule that works best for you, your planned publishing schedule and fits the purpose for the podcast. Then stick with it!

Your audience will become accustomed to seeing your podcast episode, in their feed, the same time and the same day each week (or daily, monthly – whatever schedule you decide to publish). Many of your loyal listeners look forward to receiving your new content and will become accustomed to hearing your podcasts the same day or hour they are published.

That is your goal: To develop a loyal audience!

If you upload new episodes randomly, your listeners are unable to plan when they will listen to you! This could be a problem for someone who listens to your podcast while doing housework, drive time, etc. Someone who listens to you as part of their "Bible study time" would have their routine disrupted if you suddenly changed your publication schedule.

Plan your publication schedule and stick to it. Only change it when it is absolutely necessary.

It is easier to change from just a few episodes to a more frequent basis (likely weekly to twice per week or three times per week). That is easier for your listeners to appreciate than if they were expecting to hear from you three times per week and you drop to a once per week publication schedule.

A real-life example: How would you feel when a television show that you truly enjoy and look forward to, is switched to airing at a different day or time. You've grown accustomed to a certain time and your personal routine is set to enjoy that show that initial day and time. When you find out it is on later in the evening or on a different day, that may conflict with something else that is in your routine. Your only choice now is to either change your routine or stop watching the show.

Don't force that type of decision on those who become your loyal followers!

My recommendation is that you start slow and then increase the frequency of publication as you gain experience and grow your audience.

You may also want to start a notebook or a document where you can write down your ideas. Anytime you think of a topic for your podcast during the week, you should quickly write it down, so you don't forget about it when you go to record.

I have developed a system of keeping track of items and ideas to conduct podcast episodes and also to keep track of those I have already recorded an episode for. It is a simple excel worksheet. I list the major topics across the top (say 10) and under each major topic, I list 8-10 ideas for a podcast episode on that topic. (You can cover more than one topic in each episode and this will be a record of those you covered). If you did 10 across and 10 down, you would

have 100 topics for your podcast! Publishing a weekly episode and thoroughly discussing two sub-topics each episode, you could have your entire year planned out well in advance!

Record It!

Now that you have some idea of what it is you want to talk about and you have a strict schedule, you get to the most important part – RECORDING IT!

Some people do not like pushing the record button! You've done all the planning and preparation, just hit the button! **Press record.** Pressing record on your computer is one of the hardest things you can do. But it also the most important!

Once you pass that mental barrier of "should I do this," podcasting becomes easy and enjoyable! If you are a pastor or speaker, you probably remember the first time you gave a sermon or stood up to speak in front of people. You will feel the same way the first few times you hit "record" for your podcast.

The more episodes you record, the easier (and the better) it becomes.

Required Equipment

You do not need to have a fancy podcast setup. I know a lot of "guru's" out there will tell you to "buy this microphone" and provide you recommendations (and sometimes links – affiliate links) to purchase the "recommended" equipment. They will usually emphasize how great it will make you sound, etc., etc.

DON'T DO THAT!

You probably have all of the required equipment you need, right now, to get started. Most computers have a recording device pre-installed. Most have a camera (especially modern laptops). If not, a camera that sits on your monitor is cheap enough off of Amazon. You can also use your smart phone. Although it will not be the best audio, it will do as you find your way and get started.

Editing software is easy enough to use. If you have a PC, download and install Audacity. You can learn all about it from YouTube videos. If you have a Mac, use Garageband (it's pre-installed for free on your computer already). Again, you can learn all about the editing software from YouTube videos. (FYI – I cover these two systems as part of my Podcast Training Course).

Why do I recommend you DO NOT purchase any additional equipment to start your podcast?

If you listen to the "guru's," you will spend anywhere from $200-$500 (easy) on equipment. The statistics do not lie. 60% of those who start a podcast (and list it on Apple Podcast – formerly iTunes) do not make it past the 5th or 6th episode. Some may make it to 10 and stop.

For whatever reason.

They just decide podcasting is not really what they want to do. It could the time commitment, a change in jobs, schedules, etc. It really doesn't matter. The point is, 60% of the people do not follow through on their podcasting dream.

If you purchase $500 worth of equipment and then, after one or two months, decide you do not want to continue, your microphone is now a $500 "hat rack!" And if put out on eBay to try and sell, you will not get what you paid for it. Either way, you lose money.

Start simple. Start with using what you have. Only upgrade once you know you are enjoying the process and you want to continue. Each piece of equipment you do purchase, make sure it is for the reason of improving your podcast in some way. Sound quality, ease of editing, etc.

If your podcast is part of your ministry efforts and you are using ministry finances to start and operate your podcast, you will be thankful you did not waste ministry resources on something that you later decide not to continue! That is financial stewardship!

Now, back to recording your podcast...

All you have to do is talk! Talk about things that you are passionate about and you care about. If you are having fun, your audience will have fun. Whatever niche you decided to specialize in (in the earlier example, I talked about Bible Prophecy) you should make the decision to become "the expert" in that particular area when it comes to podcasting.

When someone talks about a "podcast on Bible Prophecy" (in my earlier example), your name should immediately come to mind for those that are into listening to prophecy podcasts! The same could be said for any other Christian podcasting niche. Become the "EXPERT!"

There are a several ways you can become known as an expert in your particular niche. This is outside the scope of this book, but I provide you with that information as part of the training program.

Editing Your Episodes

Now that you have finished recording your podcast episode, you need to edit the file. There may be a minor edit to remove an awkward silence (like when you were looking for a particular scripture reference). You may want to add an "intro" and "outro" to your finished product. If that is the case, you can hire a voice over artist to create one for you.

I have used "Fiverr.com" to find voice over artists for years. I have a few favorite people I work with for very particular things. You could use "Fiverr" or you may have someone you know that has a great voice to help you out. I really do not recommend you do the speaking on your intro

and outro yourself. You can – but I believe it makes your podcast sound more professional if someone else is doing it for you and introducing you.

One point I want to make clear – NONE of this is required to start. These are things we can go over to make your podcast better in the future. But you do not need them to start out.

You can use Audacity (PC) or Garageband (Mac) to make minor edits, add intro our outro's and then save your finalized podcast episode file.

Upload Your Episode to Your Podcast Host

Once you have your edited episode file ready to load, follow your particular host provider's policies and procedures for loading it to their platform.

You will need a photo or logo. You should create show notes for each episode (simply a brief summary of what is covered in that particular episode).

Once it is loaded, you will be provided with a link from your provider. When you share this link (either on your website or on social media), anyone who clicks the link will be taken directly to that episode.

I would recommend you place a link on your church, ministry or personal website (if you have one – which almost all ministries do in this day and age). This link should lead directly to your own podcast website as offered through your host. These sites are simply "landing pages" for people who want to listen to your podcast.

Each episode will be listed here (usually with the newest episode at the top). This serves as a great archive of all the episodes you have recorded and published.

For churches or ministries, this can be a great resource for sharing your messages on a continual basis. Many ministries have been listing their sermons or messages on their church website. Think about who visits your church website…

Be honest here… Usually, your website visitors will only be the people who attend your church. You would like to think that others will visit your church or ministry website (especially if they are not attending your church). But statistics do not lie.

90% of the people that go to your website to listen to a recorded sermon are your members. And usually, it is only those who missed the service (for whatever reason).

Your podcast is a totally different ball game. You can be listed on Apple Podcasts. You can have a link to your podcast in the menu of your website. You can share the link on social media. All you have to do is tell people this is how they can find your PODCAST (or you can even call it your "archives").

This is searchable by people all over the world. If they are looking for information on the topic or niche you are podcasting about (in the earlier example, it was "Bible Prophecy"), they will be able to find your podcast.

"Well, brother Bob, why wouldn't they simply visit my church / ministry website?"

OK, let's answer that question.

Someone who is attending a different denomination than yours (and is living in a different part of the country with no intention of attending your church) is searching for information that is related to what you are sharing. They also see a couple of podcasts on the same topic.

Your link is going to direct them "XYZ Church in Any City, USA." The other podcast link is taking them to "Bible Prophecy Today" or some other such name. Which link do you believe they will click? I can guarantee you (and this may be a hard pill for pastors and ministers to swallow) – IT WILL NOT BE YOUR CHURCH WEBSITE.

Who will usually go to your church website? Members looking for specific information or potential visitors in your locale who are trying to find out where you are located and what time the services are. Not all – but most.

I hate to break your bubble, but they will not go to your church website searching for a podcast. Statistics prove that out…

You stand a better chance of gaining their attention by having a simple podcast website on the hosting platform. You can provide links to your church website in the show notes and mention your church in each episode. Some people may actually look you up on the web because of that.

But to think you will get any traction by loading your podcasts only on your personal or church website will bring you nothing but disappointment.

One more problem.

IF you become a popular podcaster and you do have people visiting your website in massive numbers, your webhosting company may just shut down your entire personal or church website (without notice)!

WHAT? Yes, it's true. It's hidden in those pesky little things called *"terms and conditions"* that nobody reads when they sign up for their website services.

If your website starts attracting so much traffic that it starts to slow their main servers down, they will shut **you** down! They do this because there may be 100 websites (or more), just like yours,

"sharing" the same server. If your website starts getting so much traffic and it start slowing down their server and its ability to support the other websites, they would rather lose you and your $10 per month than 50 others at $10 per month.

Podcast Hosting Platforms are designed for heavy traffic. They can handle the load.

Keep that in mind as you are thinking about whether you should list every episode or every message on your church or ministry website rather than a dedicated podcast hosting website.

FINALLY!

There you go. You finally launched your podcast! Keep working hard, and you will become successful. It just takes some time before you will start to see results. The most important fact is that podcasting should be simple and you should enjoy doing it.

When you focus on those two aspects, it will be reflected in your voice and your listeners will be able to tell you are having fun. That will increase listener engagement and draw more listeners (which become downloads, which increases the amount of SEO traction you receive).

RESOURCES:

The following links, websites and resources are not required. I provide them for your consideration. I've been doing this a long time. I've have developed the training program that works for Christian podcasters. This is who we focus on. It is part of our ministry effort (which is to help other ministries and Christians to "Get the Word Out" in to all the earth! We have a special program to help you LAUNCH and GROW your podcast!
www.podcast-training.com

In addition, we created the Christian podcast hosting platform, "FaithCasters.net" – "Created BY Christians FOR Christians." We provide all of the services you need to manage and grow your podcast.
www.FaithCaster.net

We also have "Evangelism Radio" (a Christian online radio station). This station has been operating 24/7 since October 2010. We have been rated, several times, as #1 in the world in the Christian Talk niche by Shoutcast.com. We were the first online Christian radio station that offered dedicated time slots and the ability to go LIVE, from anywhere in the world, in your time slot! Since your podcast is actually your own, personal, radio program…we can help you reach a larger audience through online radio in addition to only your podcast!
www.evangelismradio.com

You can check out all of the programs and services we offer in one place. This is our main website for Christian Podcasters!
www.podcastersforchrist.com