

14 Commandments of Video Preaching

By Jim Tomberlin

Of the estimated 5,000+ multisite churches in North America, half deliver their sermons by way of video, and the other half utilize live-in person teaching. With this many people worshiping and receiving spiritual instruction in this manner, it is very important to keep these “commandments” in mind when delivering sermons live as well as via video.

- 1. Thou Shalt Omit References to Time, Day, and Weather.** The most difficult thing is to remove all references to time of day, day of the week, and the weather. Avoid “tonight” or “Saturday.” Better to use words like “today” or “weekend.”
- 2. Thou Shalt Place the Camera Well.** Position the camera where it is the easiest and most natural for the speaker to look into. Don’t make it awkward for the speaker by forcing him to crane his neck to peer into the camera.
- 3. Thou Shalt Include Everyone.** Look directly into the camera near the beginning and end of each message. This makes a video audience feel included.
- 4. Thou Shalt Practice Good Eye Contact.** When speaking, it’s very powerful to look directly into the camera periodically during the message. Especially when addressing the off-site campuses and at drive-it-home moments, eyeball the camera.
- 5. Thou Shalt Use Lighting to Your Advantage.** Use camera lights in a way so that the speaker will know which camera is the live camera. In other words, make it easy for the speaker to do their job well.
- 6. Thou Shalt Help Everyone Feel Included.** When praying or making applications, include references to the people in the off-site campuses. Once in a message is all that’s needed to make hundreds of people sitting in an auditorium miles away to feel included in their own church.
- 7. Treat Everyone as Equals No Matter Where They Are.** Avoid words like “satellite” and “main” campus. They connote inequality.
- 8. Thou Shalt Avoid Awkward References to the Worship Team.** References in the message to worship leaders or vocalists by name can be awkward or meaningless because they are different at the other campuses.
- 9. Thou Shalt Avoid Unruly Camera Shots.** Avoid camera shots that remind viewers that they’re not there, such as audience reactions, audience cut-away shots, or side-shots of the speaker.
- 10. Thou Shalt Keep the Camera Shot Tight.** Stay with continual close-up head shots (video needs to feel larger-than-life), minimizing the number of full-stage and full-body shots.
- 11. Thou Shalt Not Distract Viewers with Distracting Backdrops.** Make sure the backdrop behind the speaker is not a distraction. Remove anything that isn’t essential and keep it uncluttered and simple.
- 12. Thou Shalt Include Images that Correspond with Speaker References.** Make

sure the videocast includes anything the speaker references (For example: "That's her picture you're now seeing on the screen.")

13. Thou Shalt Make Sure Every Speaker Knows These Commandments. Be sure to give these guidelines to any guest speakers so that they too can make the most of your church's video ministry.

14. Thou Shalt Smile as Much as Possible. Smiling helps connect your audience and keep people engaged. Smile a lot!

Remember as you prepare your messages to be mindful that you're teaching a multisite flock that encompasses more than those in the room with you. They see you as their pastor and spiritual leader. They feel connected to you; they love you. They come because of the spiritual teaching they receive from you.

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