

Virtual Preaching Practicals

Speaking to a camera is very different than speaking to a crowd. But once we remember that truly, we always serve an audience of One, we're able to adjust and begin to get more comfortable with our current situation.

Following are some things to keep in mind to make the most of this opportunity to share the Gospel in a different way to a rather “captive” audience. 😊

1. Comfort

You need to be comfortable, and you need to make those watching comfortable.

- Choose your chair wisely. Is it quiet, and can you comfortably stay seated in one position for 15-20 minutes?
- Think about a posture you can maintain, but also what it communicates to others - no crossed arms, etc.
- What is seen on camera? “Dress your set” - Look at your setting on camera and mark off the frame of what the viewer sees. Use props and close in the space to make it warmer and more invitational. Think “Masterpiece Theatre.”
- Practice before you record or go live. Get comfortable staring down the camera lens, but don't feel like you have to look directly at it the whole time.
- If anyone else is joining you on the video, they need to be very aware of their facial expressions. Often, people's “neutral” expression can read on-camera as upset or bored. So they will have to up their game and intentionally smile and nod the whole time.

2. Content

It's the same Gospel message, but delivered in a way an online audience can receive it, not from a televangelist, but from a local church pastor.

- 15 to 20 min maximum
- Wait a few minutes and “small talk” while you encourage people to share the video, then get into your message.
- Have someone add your keys points and scriptures in the comments. Even better - link to a Bible app where they can “read more,” and use a graphic for points (ask someone aged 14-30 to make sermon points for you on “Word Swag” app).
- Have coffee or a mug of water so you pause, breathe, and also allow the watchers to pause and think things through with you.

3. Conversation

Preachers are often better talkers than we are conversationalists. The best online communicators have a conversation with their viewers. This can be done with live video or pre-recorded.

- There's no laugh track! Laugh at your own jokes, and pause for others to laugh.
- Write 3 interaction points (questions, calls for an emoji or “thumbs up” on the FB comment section) into your sermon plan. Others can be added spontaneously, but make a plan for these so they keep people engaged in what they're watching.
- Have some planted conversationalists in the comments to welcome people by name and “like” others' comments.
- If going live, practice looking at the comment thread to respond back. This is next-level, so don't worry about it if you can't because it makes you loose your place.

- No interruptions - YOU WILL BE INTERRUPTED AT SOME POINT. The goal is to simply not see the child, the pet, the door, your sidetracked mind, as an interruption. Roll with it. People like to see that you're human, so deal with it the same way you would if the viewer were in your living room and someone walked through. Say hi, show the pug, move on.

Questions?

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- Text or e-mail works best for me, because there are 7 people and 3 dogs in our house. ;-) I can also schedule a Zoom chat at a time that works best for us.
- For tech questions, just use the above and I can forward you on to my husband Ben if I don't have the answer.