



 **WATCH CHAPTER 2: OPENING DEVOTION**

- Someone responds with prayer, asking God’s blessing upon the meeting.

Preparation for this session ...

1. Do you currently have any statistical information on your membership? If so, what information are you gathering?
2. Is there any resistance in your congregation towards gathering this information? If yes, explain.
3. Where is this information located?
4. Who has access to this statistical information?
5. How are you utilizing this information for your current ministry?

 **WATCH CHAPTER 2, PART 1: “DOABLE AND NECESSARY”**

Why can we be sure that gathering member information is ...

- Doable?
- Necessary?



WATCH CHAPTER 2, PART 2: “USING CHURCH SOFTWARE”

- If you are not currently using church management software, why not?

- List some examples of what good church management software would allow you to do.

- What are some dangers of not using church management software?

* See addendum resources:

Choosing a Church Management Software Program

The Ideal Church Database



WATCH CHAPTER 2, PART 3: “WHO TO TRAIN, WHAT TO TRACK”

- As you watch the video, jot down important points. After the video, discuss your notes.



WATCH CHAPTER 2, PART 4: “CARRYING OUT THE PLAN”

- List the steps mentioned in the video and discuss why each is important:



WATCH CHAPTER 2, PART 5: “*UPDATING*”

- How often should you ask your members to review their information?



WATCH CHAPTER 2: CLOSING DEVOTION

- Someone closes with prayer.



ADDENDUM #1- Considerations for Choosing a Church Management Software Program

1. Since every church's situation is unique, it is not possible to recommend the "ideal" church software. Consider the following when choosing software:
 - What are your needs?

 - What do you want the software to do?

 - Who will be setting it up?

 - What is your budget?

 - What is the timeline from purchasing to implementing the software?

2. Talk to congregations in your community or other congregations of similar size. See what they are doing, what they like and don't like and why. For example:
 - What is the name of the database?

 - What is the cost/fee structure?

 - What features are available? (Which are especially helpful?)

 - Why do they recommend it?

3. Check out websites like Capterra for church software options based on price, needs, wants, and size of congregation, <https://www.capterra.com/church-management-software/>.



ADDENDUM #2 - THE IDEAL CHURCH DATABASE

This list is all the things an imaginary database COULD do. No database solution does all these things or does them equally well. Each congregation's database decision needs to be based on which system (and price) fits their needs best.

Church Database - The main church database stores not only member information but connects that information to every other area on this list.

PEOPLE CARE

Directory - A cloud-based directory would be searchable to quickly view notes and contact information about all members and guests. Ideally, members would be able to update their own contact information online. This directory could be used online and on mobile devices by staff and by members. The member version would only show contact information that each member has given permission to share.

Printed Directory - For those who can't use an online/mobile directory, the option to print a directory would be useful.

Pastors - Pastors would be able to share notes and updates with each other that are not accessible by anyone else. A series of steps could be created (called a process) to help track where members are. For example, a marriage process could have steps for initial application, pre-marriage counseling, and service planning. Completion of each step could be recorded, along with any notes.

Worship Attendance - Worship attendance would be recorded in the database after each weekend.

Elders - The pastors and elders would be able to have private notes and processes to follow-up with members in need of spiritual care. The elders could run reports based on worship attendance. Future contacts could be assigned to specific elders.

Outreach - The outreach board would be able to have a prospect database as part of the main database to follow up with guests. This could be tied to worship attendance. If a guest is in worship, the outreach board can have that information (and be automatically alerted) as soon as it is entered. A process could be set up with steps to deliver a welcome package, etc.

CHURCH FINANCES

Contribution Records - Contribution records would be entered into the database. This section would be protected so that only those in charge of entering the contribution information would have access to see the data. Year-end giving statements could be quickly printed.

Online & Mobile Giving - Online and mobile giving would be integrated, so that as soon as someone gives a gift, it is posted on their contribution page.

Payment Processor - Ideally, a church's database would integrate with their payment processor, so that no manual data entry is needed. Whenever someone gives through the payment processor, it is automatically entered in the database.

Accounting Software - Ideally, the contribution information would integrate with a congregation's accounting software.

COMMUNICATION

Communication - Since the database has all the members' contact information, it ideally would be the hub for communication. For example, a mail merge list could be exported to mail out monthly newsletters.

MailChimp - MailChimp is used to email newsletters. Ideally, the database would integrate with MailChimp, so that any email addresses updated in the database would automatically update in MailChimp. Also, emails without pictures could be sent directly from the database to various groups.

Texts – Text messages could be sent to the whole congregation or to a specific group using the database software.

Push Notifications – Push notifications could be sent to smartphone apps from the database software. Push notifications are the messages that show up on your main screen and ding when the sound is on.

MEMBER INVOLVEMENT & SCHEDULING

Forms & Surveys – Members could fill out forms and surveys online. This eliminates the need to enter the data manually later (as with a paper survey). Forms could be used in many ways. Forms are included in member involvement. Ideally, forms could then be searched. For example, a list could be generated for female members with children who answered a form question a certain way.

Volunteer Coordinator – A volunteer coordinator could match up member's interests with opportunities to serve.

Groups – Members in the database could join different groups. Group leaders could post news and files on the group page. Some databases allow group members to reply and post comments.

Events – Groups can schedule events.

Facility Management – Ideally, the database includes facility management. All the rooms and resources are listed. When an event is scheduled, it includes a request to book one or more rooms. The database would provide tools to see the overall facility schedule.

Events – Events are posted publicly on calendars.

Worship Planning Software – Some databases include worship planning software to schedule music, musicians, etc.

CHILDREN CHECK-IN

Children Check-in – Many databases include software for checking children into ministries. This fits churches that have a “children’s church” on Sunday where parents drop off their children and then worship just with adults. The database prints out labels that the children and parents wear.

SCHOOL

School – Ideally, the church database would integrate with the school information, so that if contact information is changed on the church side, it automatically updates on the school side.

PowerSchool – Schools often use PowerSchool for grading. <https://www.powerschool.com/impact/school-operations/>

Procare – Schools often use Procare for childcare. <https://www.procaresoftware.com/products-and-services/software-overview/>

Online School Registration – Ideally, the forms function could be used to do some/all of the school registration online.

Tuition & Fees – Ideally, school tuition and fees could be paid online/mobile through the same payment processor, and then be automatically recorded with their other contribution records (though marked as NOT tax-deductible).

APPS

Apps are designed specifically to run on smart phones or tablets (iOS or Android). Native apps are usually faster and smoother than trying to access the same information on a website with a mobile device.

Ideally, the *staff app* would allow all member data to be viewed and edited on a mobile device, along with tools to communicate with groups. A *member app* would include a directory (limited by each member's privacy settings), the ability to see and edit their own profile, see their giving statements, give online, participate in the groups they're in, see events and the calendars, and receive push notifications.

WEBSITE

If the database includes a congregation's main calendar, events, and groups listing, it would be ideal if the congregation's database would integrate with their website. Then, for example, if an event is scheduled in its database, it would automatically be posted on their website.

In addition, a congregation's website would have a place for members to log in. Once logged in, members would also be able to do the same things as on the app: search the church directory (limited by each member's privacy settings), see and edit their own profile, see their giving statements, give online, participate in the groups, and see events and the calendars.