

# The Connection Gap: Why Church Community Fails in the Digital Age

A research summary by ChurchLinkUp · churchlinkup.com · 2026

**55%**

cite belonging as #1 reason for staying  
*Amer. Bible Society 2024*

**30%**

weekly attendance — down from 42%  
two decades ago  
*Gallup 2024*

**37%**

of 18-29 yr-olds left feeling "out of  
place"  
*Lifeway Research 2024*

**50M**

Americans deterred by cliques or  
exclusion  
*Amer. Bible Society 2024*

## The Problem

People come for a season, learn a few first names, then stop showing up. Nobody knew them well enough to notice.

## What the Research Shows

**Belonging beats belief.** 55% of churchgoers cite community as their #1 reason for staying — above shared beliefs and worship. (Amer. Bible Society, 2024)

**Small groups are shrinking.** Involvement dropped from 50% of attendees in 2008 to 44% in 2022. (Lifeway Research)

**Young adults aren't leaving over doctrine.** 37% of 18-29 yr-olds who left said they felt 'out of place.' Adults 30-49 who switched cited deeper relationships (65%) and a more welcoming atmosphere (68%). (Lifeway, 2024)

**Cliques are costly.** 20% of Americans say exclusion pushed them away — roughly 50 million people. Most churches did nothing intentionally wrong. They just never built a pathway in.

## Why Current Tools Fall Short

**Facebook groups** fill up with announcements. A growing portion of your congregation isn't on it or doesn't want church mixed into their feed.

**Printed directories** are outdated before they come back from the printer. People who joined after photo day aren't in it.

**Church management software** was designed for staff, not members. Nobody logs in to connect with a fellow congregant.

## Pricing

**\$299/year** for up to 1,000 members. All features included. Annual invoice, Net 30. Your treasurer cuts a check. Less than most churches spend in a month on bulletins.

## Sources

- Gallup, "Church Attendance Declined..." March 2024
- Amer. Bible Society, State of the Bible 2024, Ch. 5
- Lifeway Research, "Feeling of Belonging," Aug 2024
- Lifeway Research, "Shrinking Small Groups"
- Dunkelman, The Vanishing Neighbor, Norton 2014
- Pew Research, Religious Landscape Study, Feb 2025

## What ChurchLinkUp Is

You can sit three rows behind the same family for two years and never learn their last name. ChurchLinkUp fixes that — not church administration, not giving management. Just: can your members find each other and connect?

<b>Private Directory</b>	Search by name, ministry, or family. Each member controls what contact info is visible.
<b>"We've Met"</b>	Track who you've actually connected with. Turns a vague intention into something actionable.
<b>Prayer Board</b>	Post requests, mark them answered, respond to others. Anonymous posting and admin moderation included.
<b>Ministry Tags</b>	Tag yourself by ministry area. Filter the directory to find everyone who serves in the same corner of church life.
<b>Events &amp; Birthdays</b>	RSVP and headcounts for events. Birthdays surface weekly so members have a reason to reach out.
<b>Easy Onboarding</b>	Join code + QR link. Members join at churchlinkup.com in about two minutes. No app store.
<b>Family Grouping</b>	Families are linked in the directory. Each person keeps their own profile and privacy settings.
<b>Privacy First</b>	No ads. No data selling. Private by default. Only your church sees your church.

## The Problem Looks Different by Size

SIZE	WHAT GOES WRONG	HOW CLU HELPS
Small <100	New faces find every friendship already years old. No visible way in.	New member spotlight + We've Met tracker.
Mid 100-300	Been attending for years, still only know the same eight people.	Searchable directory + ministry tags.
Large 300-1K	Staff can't track 500 relationships. People disappear unnoticed.	CSV import, multi-admin roles.
Mega 1K+	Real community only happens inside sub-groups.	Ministry tags map and connect sub-communities.

## Getting Started

- Contact us at churchlinkup.com to set up your directory.
- Put the join code in your bulletin or on the screen.
- Members join in two minutes. No app store required.
- Annual invoice. Net 30. Check or ACH.

See if ChurchLinkUp is right for your church

\$299/year · All features · Up to 1,000 members · Annual invoice · Net 30

[churchlinkup.com](https://churchlinkup.com)