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## Single Controlled Entry vs. Open Campus

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***This is ONE guy's perspective that must be weighed against law, insurance, culture, etc.***

Note: This is a physical access control question that directly affects your team's ability to respond. It is separate from the door-locking policy during service, though the two are closely related.

How many ways can someone enter your building(s) — and how many of those entry points are monitored? Most churches operate with multiple unlocked doors, an open parking lot, and no formal check-in for adults. That is a campus access posture, whether it is intentional or not. This document helps you think through what it means to control entry, and what tradeoffs come with different postures.

This question is most common as it related to during regular services, but a strong church rarely doesn't have other ministry elements throughout the week, even when "The Office is Closed" times. So think about this across all buildings and all days of the weeks. The default should always be locked.

Regardless of which option you choose under which circumstances, other security controls (e.g. cameras) must also be integrated into the layers of security.

|      | Single Controlled Entry Point   | Multiple Staffed Entry Points   | Open Campus  |
|------|---|---|--|
| Pros | <p>All traffic flows through one known point — easiest to monitor and staff.</p> <p>Creates a natural checkpoint for greeters and security.</p> <p>Simplest to harden if a threat is identified.</p> <p>Easiest for law enforcement to understand and work with during an incident.</p> | <p>Distributes traffic — reduces crowding at a single entry and potential safety issue if there is a inflow and outflow at same door.</p> <p>Allows for campus-wide coverage without funneling everyone through one spot.</p> <p>Better suited for large campuses with multiple buildings or parking areas.</p> | <p>Maximum hospitality — no barriers for anyone.</p> <p>No coordination or staffing burden.</p> <p>Works for small, tight-knit congregations with high mutual familiarity.</p> |
| Cons | <p>Difficult to enforce on most existing church campuses — side doors, fire exits, kids exit to playground, and</p>   | <p>Requires significantly more volunteers or staff to cover effectively.</p> <p>Inconsistency between entry points creates gaps.</p>  | <p>No ability to detect or deter a threat before they are inside.</p>  |

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|                             | <p>parking lot access points undermine the concept unless all are secured.</p> <p>Can feel unwelcoming to first-time visitors if not handled with hospitality intentionality.</p> <p>Single point of failure — if it is overwhelmed or bypassed, there is no backup.</p>   | <p>Coordination and communication between door teams must be established.</p>   | <p>Team cannot know who is in the building or when they arrived. Incident response is entirely reactive.</p> <p>Homeless / Unhoused individuals can cause additional challenges</p>  |
| <p><b>Also Consider</b></p> | <p>Walk your campus before you choose a policy. Count every door that a person could enter through. Be honest about which ones you can actually staff.</p> <p>A single controlled entry that is not enforced is worse than no policy — it creates false assurance.</p> <p>Even a single controlled entry should have a secondary exit-only door with an alarm.</p> | <p>Staffing multiple doors requires a plan, radios or phones, and consistent protocols.</p> <p>Prioritize: staff the highest-traffic and highest-risk entry points first. (see our Post prioritization tool @ <a href="https://askmccconnell.com/checklists/">https://askmccconnell.com/checklists/</a> )</p> <p>Consider which doors can be exit-only with door alarms — reducing the staffing burden.</p> | <p>An open campus is a valid choice for the right environment — make it intentionally.</p> <p>Compensate with strong interior awareness: team members positioned throughout the sanctuary and hallways. Review this posture after any incident or change in your threat environment.</p> <p>Determine when Open Campus is really needed as it should not be the solution for all ministry times.</p> |