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## RECRUITING MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates them in everyone ... for the common good.  
I Corinthians 12:4-7

Are you serious? I haven't even written the thank you notes to this year's volunteers, and you are asking me to think about next fall?

YES! Do you remember the panic late last August, when you still needed Sunday school teachers, nursery workers, confirmation guides, high school faith mentors, congregational baptismal sponsors, ushers, greeters, acolytes, readers, adult small group facilitators ... Oh, yes, now I remember! Remember your vow last August: Never again!

This is the time to begin, if we really want August to be different.  
So, how do we begin?

### THIS IS THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

- Every single one of us is called to our own ministry, consistent with the gifts God has given us to serve God's family.
- Ministry volunteers are not asked to help you with your ministry, but to do the one for which God has equipped them, to which God calls them.
- This is how we live our baptism and "let your light so shine."

### BE CLEAR ABOUT THE MINISTRY POSITION

- Describe the position in detail and be clear that it is ministry, not task!
- Have a written ministry position description and give it to the person you invite.
- Don't under-sell. Be realistic about time commitment and expectations.
- Let them know why this ministry is important.
- Outline the training and support they will receive.

### GET TO KNOW YOUR POTENTIAL MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS

- Don't just invite those you know or the "usual suspects." Ask other staff, leaders, and friends to help you think about who might do well in this ministry ... and ask them why.

- Include new members and those who have become inactive.
- Do an interview and discover the gifts and passions they would bring to this ministry.
- Ask about past experiences they've had.
- Ask about their availability.

### PERSONAL INVITATION

- Ask individuals. Face-to-face is best.
- Name the gifts you or someone else has seen in them for this ministry.
- Don't ask for an answer, but ask them to consider it and pray about it.
- Commit to pray for them, too.
- Tell them you will call or reconnect with them in a week ... then, do it.

### ASK EACH OF THEM TO INVITE A MINISTRY PARTNER

- In Luke 10, Jesus sent disciples out two-by-two. Not a bad example!
- Choosing a shared ministry partner makes it more likely they will enjoy the experience, cover for one another when one needs to be absent, feel fulfilled by the experience, and want to do it again.
- This also extends your reach beyond those you already know.

### ISSUE A CALL

- When the volunteer says, "Yes! I'd love to!" send a letter, confirming the ministry for which this person has volunteered.
- Restate the gifts this person has for the ministry.
- Issue it as a call, God calling them to serve God's family, to build God's kingdom. (This beats the pants off a reluctant yes, delivered only because the one who asked is desperate and pleading!)

### INTERVIEW AND SCREEN

- If this is a first time in this ministry, do a personal interview to answer any questions the ministry volunteer might have.
- An interview is a wonderful way for you and your volunteer to get to know one another.
- Do a risk management screening. This protects the ministry volunteer, those they serve, and the church.

### INSTALL AND BLESS THEM

- Many congregations celebrate and thank their volunteers when their ministry commitment is done.



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important to install and bless them in worship or during a time of training.

- Make sure you call it “ministry.”
- Let the congregation see and appreciate all it takes to do the ministries of your congregation.

#### ONGOING TRAINING AND SUPPORT

- Plan a beginning training ... and continue to do training during the year. None of us can remember all that we need to know all year long!
- Support can be as easy as being available before and after your volunteer is there to serve. Ask how it is going. Ask what you can do to support your ministry volunteer.
- Sometimes, it means an intervention with a challenging person or partnering with your volunteer for a session or two.

#### SAYING “THANK YOU,” EARLY AND OFTEN

- A smile, a warm “thank you,” a short note or email or card or text is a wonderful gift. Do it early. Do it often.
- Coffee and cookies say, “I appreciate you. Thank you so much.”
- Thank your ministry volunteers in the newsletter, the bulletin, the announcements.
- No one volunteers to get a dinner or a gift. They do it to express their love of Jesus. Let them know they have done just that.

**NOW, TAKE A DEEP BREATH ... AND BEGIN! GOD IS BLESSING YOU AND MULTIPLYING YOUR MINISTRY!**