SIX TERRIBLE WAYS TO RECRUIT MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS IN YOUR CHURCH

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Would you like to do the worst possible job of getting people involved in ministry in your church?

Sometimes I think church leaders take the most negative approaches in an attempt to encourage more people to get involved in ministry in the church.

There are several common blunders. Here are six of them:

1. **Don’t pray about it.** We often give lip service to prayer. We say we believe in prayer, but we don’t act like it. We know that getting people involved in ministry in the church is one of the most important things we can do; but we try to do it in our own power. Try praying before asking a ministry volunteer. God just might surprise you.
2. **Make a general announcement.** Ever heard something like this statement in a church? “We need someone to teach the third grade Sunday school class. If you are interested let me know.” Granted, you might get some volunteers. Those volunteers typically fall in one of two categories: the overworked already, and the person who has no business teaching that class.
3. **Wait until the last minute.** If you are recruiting people to lead small groups two weeks before the groups are scheduled to start, you will frustrate and discourage them. That is something that should have happened months earlier. You are communicating to those recruited that the ministry is not that important, that you are asking them as an afterthought.
4. **Do not consider the gifts, abilities, and schedules of those you are recruiting.** It’s the worn out cliché: Trying to put a square peg in a round hole. If you ask me to do something that requires manual dexterity, forget it. I’m not sure which end of a hammer to use. We are all different. We are all gifted differently. We all have different schedules.
5. **Send the person on a guilt trip.** Great ministry volunteers are naturally (or supernaturally) motivated to do their ministry. Guilt is a negative motivation that guarantees the person will be miserable in the ministry. He or she will be perpetually frustrated or drop out. Neither option is good.
6. **Don’t follow up.** Lack of follow up indicates you were just trying to reach a quota or fill a blank. It’s a path toward making the ministry volunteer feel unappreciated and unwanted. I recommend you mark your calendar for three quick emails after a person accepts a volunteer ministry position: 30 days later; three months later; and six months later. Ask them two simple questions: How are you doing? What do you need?

The body of Christ is an amazing gift when its members are doing what God has called and gifted them to do. Read 1 Corinthians 12 to see how really important this ministry should be.

But don’t start poorly. How you recruit ministry volunteers will make an incredible difference, for good or bad, in your church.