



EQUIPPER

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Dear pastors and ministry leaders:

We've devoted this issue of *Equipper* to the wonderful women and men who give sacrificially of their time and talent to serve as volunteers within their local church. Many reading this are either volunteer (bivocational) pastors, volunteer ministry leaders or volunteer ministry workers. I know that all of you, along with our employed pastors, serve because you feel called of God to do so. Thanks for answering that call and for all you are doing in our Lord's service. You are highly valued, appreciated and needed!

In this issue we provide some tips concerning church volunteers that, I hope, will encourage you personally (as a volunteer) and help you care for the volunteers who you are charged with leading (including recruiting, nurturing and motivating). This work is no small challenge, and I deeply appreciate your good service in this vital area of ministry.

Your fellow-laborer in Christ's service,
Greg Williams
Director, U.S. Church Administration and Development

Build your volunteer team

There are no "sure-fire," "one-size-fits-all" ways to do it, but here are four universal principles for building effective teams of ministry volunteers:

1. Connect people to their passion

It doesn't matter how much you need someone for a particular ministry task, if they aren't passionate about the service opportunity, they won't likely stick with it.

2. Connect expectations to reality

Clarify up-front what the volunteer responsibility entails and the amount of time the volunteer can provide to the task. Be sure that the two match up. Learn to forgo unnecessary ministries (stay focused; keep it simple).

3. Connect people to community

People who serve in isolation won't be on your team for long. Even if their role is a "one-person-job," make sure you keep them connected to the bigger team in some way (team meetings, team emails, etc.)

4. Connect people to the vision

Constantly remind your volunteers of how they are helping accomplish the congregation's vision and mission. People serve well and for the long-haul because they want to make a difference.



"Welcome, O weary searcher for truth!
Say, have you ever worked with kids?"

*This section is adapted from a ChurchLeaders.com article by Tim Peters
(Cartoon from Leadership.com, used with permission)*

Equipping all kinds of churches for all kinds of people in all kinds of places.

Avoid these motivation killers

Motivating volunteers involves two elements: what the person brings to the situation (their needs, attitudes and desires), and what the situation brings to the person (responsibility, training, leadership climate, etc.). Those who oversee volunteers must be aware of the first element, while focusing on the second with an eye toward providing situations that motivate.

Motivation is the means by which leaders encourage their volunteers to become involved in the ministry of the church, calling them to a life of serving God (see Hebrews 10:24). Leaders who are successful at motivating volunteers have learned to avoid these five motivation killers:



1. Fear

Fear can paralyze people in ministry. When they fear failure they will not take the necessary risks that are part and parcel of effective ministry. If they fear that they will be incompetent or inadequate for the assigned responsibility, they will be less likely to commit to the task. If they fear rejection and criticism, they will avoid any ministry which might cause any threat or insecurity. If people are afraid, they will avoid serving. The leaders, and the church, need to honestly examine the causes of fear in people and *cultivate a climate of ministry where people are secure*. A climate of security involves freedom to fail, encouragement to grow, and avoidance of criticism for mistakes.

2. Lack of appreciation

Some people thrive on appreciation. If they feel unappreciated they will become discouraged and lose their desire to serve. When their efforts and accomplishments are not appreciated they feel that their contribution is insignificant.

3. Sense of futility

Motivation is directly related to purpose and achievement. If people feel they are devoting their time and talents to a task that is meaningless and futile, they will not be inspired to sacrifice to perform the task effectively. The church not only needs to be wise stewards of people's financial gifts, they also need to be wise stewards of their time.

4. Responsibility without authority

If people are given a responsibility for a ministry but not the authority and freedom to personally help in developing it, they will become discouraged.

5. Unclear responsibilities

Those who desire to serve can become frustrated when they are unclear about the responsibilities that they have. Unclear responsibilities and a lack of clear objectives immobilize people, not because they do not want to serve, but because they are unclear concerning what they are to do.

The written material on this page is adapted from an issue of "Mikros," a newsletter published by the Institute of Church Health. The cartoon, used with permission, is from Leadership.com.