

Volunteer Development



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Leader' Guide

How to use "Volunteer Development" by BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS in your regularly scheduled meetings.

Welcome to *BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS: Your Complete Guide to Leadership Training*. You've purchased an innovative resource that will help you develop leaders who can think strategically and biblically about the church. Selected by the editors of *Leadership Resources* and *Christianity Today International*, the material comes from respected thinkers and church leaders.

BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS is not just another program. Each theme contains materials on the topic you choose—no tedious program to follow. The materials work when you want, where you want and the way you want it to. It's completely flexible and easy to use.

You probably already have regularly scheduled meetings with board members or with other committees or groups of leaders. *BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS* fits easily into what you're already doing. Here's how to use *BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS* at the beginning of a board meeting or committee meeting:

1. Select a learning tool. In this theme of "Volunteer Development," you'll find multiple types of handouts from which to choose:

- ◆ Bible study
- ◆ case study
- ◆ activities
- ◆ interview
- ◆ devotionals
- ◆ resources
- ◆ assessment tools
- ◆ how-to articles
- ◆ sample retreat

2. Select a handout. Suppose, for example, your board or team needs help getting and keeping people involved. You could select one of three how-to articles in this theme: "3 Ways to Get People Involved" (p. 12), "How to Write a Ministry 'Job Description'" (p. 13), and "Keys to Long-term Successful Service" (p. 14). From these options, select the one that best fits what you want to accomplish.

3. Photocopy the handout. Let's say you selected "3 Ways to Get People Involved." Photocopy as many copies as you need—you do not need to ask for permission to photocopy any material from *BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS* (as long as you are using the material in a church or educational setting and are not charging for it).

4. Prepare for the discussion. We recommend you read the Scripture passages and identify key discussion questions. How will you apply the principles to specific decisions your church is making?

5. Lead the discussion. Most handouts can be read within 5 minutes. After you have allowed time for reading, begin the discussion by asking one of the provided questions. Be ready to move the discussion to specific issues your church is facing.

Most *BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS* handouts can be discussed in 15 or 20 minutes. Your board, committee, or team will still have plenty of time to discuss its agenda.

Need more material, or something on a specific topic? See our website at www.BuildingChurchLeaders.com.

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Bringing Out Their Best

What the Bible can teach us about motivating people to minister.

Matthew 20:20–28

Reflect (15 minutes) Distribute an index card to each person. Ask people to jot a brief description of an experience they've had in volunteering, positive or negative (e.g.: "I was once fired from a volunteer position in youth sports" or "I helped with children's church and loved it" or "I didn't get along with the leader of my club"). Inform the group up front that the statements will be read aloud.

Now gather the cards, shuffle them, and read them aloud. Have some fun guessing who wrote what. Take a few minutes to allow folks to give additional information about their experience.

- ♦ What is the most difficult thing about being a ministry member or volunteer?
- ♦ What challenges do we face in keeping people happy and effective?

What do you think the Bible can teach us about developing people to serve?

Detect (15 minutes) In advance, write the Bible passages listed below on slips of paper, one passage per paper. Have everyone find a partner and then give each pair one or more of the Scripture passages to study. Based on each passage, people should write principles about "developing people to minister."

After a few minutes of partner-work, gather the group for a report of findings. Here are some possible points participants might raise:

- ♦ 1 Samuel 22:1-2: Realize God can accomplish much through those who have needs and problems.
- ♦ Ezra 1:1-5: Leaders should gather around them people whose hearts have been moved by God.
- ♦ Matthew 20:20-28: Leaders, relate to your followers as their servant.
- ♦ John 13:12-17: People need to be shown by example how to minister.
- ♦ Acts 6:1-7: Look for people with spiritual qualifications: (e.g., wise, or Spirit-led).
- ♦ Ephesians 4:11-13: Let people know their importance: they are ministers!
- ♦ Hebrews 5:1-2: Deal gently with mistakes and ineptitude.

Close this step by asking whether anyone knows other Scripture passages that could shed light on these issues. If so, look briefly at those.

Connect (15 minutes) Distribute paper and give individuals this scenario: You are a church leadership consultant. You have been hired to give your advice to a church board that wants to know how to motivate people to serve and keep them effective. Drawing upon your experience and the principles of Scripture we've just discussed, develop a "Top Five List" of recommendations you would urge this church to implement.

Allow plenty of time for individuals to think before you call for responses. Then discuss a "Top Five List for Our Church" from the suggestions offered.

Close in prayer for God to send forth laborers into his harvest field, and for wisdom about how to coordinate their efforts.

—GARY WILDE



The Right People in the Right Places

The solution is not to recruit harder.

1 Corinthians 12:1–7

Every church needs more workers. And often, some workers feel frustrated and probably aren't in the right area. How exactly does a church find the right people for the right positions?

BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS asked Bruce Bugbee, president of Network Ministries International (www.networkministries.com) and coauthor of Network: The Right People in the Right Places for the Right Reasons (Zondervan).

Every church has certain essential ministries, such as nursery and Sunday school. What do you do when you can't get enough people for those?

There's a difference between a "unique contribution" and a "community contribution." While each of us has a unique contribution to make that reflects our passions, gifts, and style, all of us are able to make what I call a community contribution. I can usher; I can work in the nursery; I can push a vacuum. That is about servanthood. A person may not be gifted to work in the nursery every week for a year, but he or she can step into the nursery once a quarter.

If you consistently don't have enough people, maybe God wants you to do the ministry differently. A church says, "We don't have enough teachers." That's true when they're looking for one teacher for every seven kids. But maybe they could have one teacher for every 26 kids, as long as they also had two adult shepherds and encouragers in the room.

Many churches teach on spiritual gifts and urge people to get involved, yet they still struggle to recruit workers. What's missing?

We don't recruit; we invite people. The church invites people to an opportunity to fulfill their calling.

Most people know they should serve. Most people want to serve. But most people do not know where or how they can best serve. As a result, they've been stuck in a ministry or position that didn't work for them, and they got frustrated.

So we need a process that helps people understand:

- ◆ Who has God made me to be?
- ◆ How does this church operate?
- ◆ How do I uniquely fit in?

Bruce Bugbee

"The church invites people to fulfill their calling."

People can't answer those questions on their own?

Most people go to the church's leaders to get direction on where and how to serve. And sometimes that means they get placed where the greatest need is, not where they have the greatest gift or passion.

I wasn't raised in the church. When I came into the church at 19 years old, I didn't know how the church was supposed to function. Purely out of ignorance, I asked, "Why are we doing things this way?" I discovered that a lot of people were frustrated. Out of a servant's heart, they jumped into ministries, but it wasn't a positive experience, and they concluded there was something wrong with them.

What's the better way?

Creating a system that helps people discover their passion, giftedness, and style.

When people serve in their area of passion, they are highly motivated. When they serve in their area of giftedness, they are competent. When they serve in their style, they are fulfilled. When they're doing all three, ministry gives them energy. ➤



The Right People in the Right Places *continued*

Pastors and elders are busy. They may say, “Helping people determine their spiritual gifts and serve accordingly is a great idea, but I don’t have time to talk to everybody.”

True. But if you don’t create some kind of system that does that, you’re going to spend lots of time every year filling slots. Most church leaders would rather use that time to set up a system in which people can understand their gifts and get connected. Think about what happens when you do that: People know their gifts and passions, so they no longer have to look to the leaders to tell them what to do. They look for an opportunity to do what God has called them to do.

According to research by Christianity Today, many people don’t know their spiritual gifts.

Scripture clearly says, in 1 Corinthians 12:1, “Now concerning spiritual gifts I don’t want you to be unaware.” But many people are ignorant of their spiritual gifts.

To me, the place to start is to help church leaders understand their passion, their gifts, and their style.

In Acts 6, there was a problem in the daily distribution of food to widows, and some people complained to the leaders. The leaders said, “It wouldn’t be good for us to get involved; our ministry is the preaching of the Word.” That sounds a little uppity; aren’t they supposed to be servants? But they knew who they were and what their primary ministry was. That knowledge of their primary calling allowed seven other people to have a ministry that they didn’t have before.

What happens in a church when people discover and act on their God-given gifts?

I was in a smaller church helping people discover their gifts, and the people there said, “We don’t need to talk to Ida; everybody knows Ida.” She was maybe 75 and had been in the church for a long time. I said, “No, everybody needs to participate.” So people finally asked her, “Ida, what has God put on your heart?” She said, “Oh, I’d love to tutor kids, maybe teach English as a second language.” The community had a lot of immigrants and migrant workers, and Ida had a heart to tutor these kids. Another woman heard this and said, “Ida, I’ve known you for 25 years, and I never knew that.” Ida looked at her and said, “Honey, nobody’s ever asked me.”

How freeing.

What’s really freeing is when we learn to accept each other’s gifts. I have learned that every Christian has a lot more energy and excitement for some things than other things. We ought to quit beating each other up for the fact that you don’t care about what I care about. You carry the banner for Christ to the abortion clinics and let the other person carry the banner for discipleship and another carry the banner for evangelism and another carry the banner for children’s ministries.

I was helping people in a church understand who they are and what their role in ministry could be. Afterward, a 70-year-old guy came up to me. He had Parkinson’s disease, so his hand was shaking a little bit when he reached out to shake my hand. His eyes were watery, and he said, “You know, for the first time I feel like it’s okay to be me.”

Discuss

1. How does our church help people discover their spiritual gifts?
2. What part of this discovery process could be improved?
3. What might God be saying to our church through 1 Corinthians 12:1-7?
4. How are we as a church getting the right people in the right place for the right reasons?



3 Myths about Christian Service

The misconceptions and the reality of helping people in need.

Matthew 25:31–46; Hebrews 13:1–3

Some ministries—those dealing with the urgent needs of fatherless youths, recovering addicts, and the homeless, for example—are fraught with difficulty given the chaotic lives of the people they serve. Even the next-door neighbor in the suburb can be a handful. Whatever the mission, volunteers can be unaware of pitfalls for discouragement.

Misconception #1: I’m going to help these people.

Any approach that sees only a need in others and fails to recognize our own neediness is flawed. Yes, we are the light of the world, as Jesus says. But some volunteers seem to think that only they are the light of the world and that they are not in need of receiving light. It’s a subtle snare.

Our approach involves allowing ourselves to be served just as we serve others. It’s healthy for everyone, even the poorest of the poor, to give, and it’s healthy for everyone to receive.

I have seen this in others	I have believed this myself
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Misconception #2: I’m the only one doing anything to help.

We sat in a meeting one day as a new guy in town berated churches as being unwilling to serve the community. He then accused the local government of the same. In the room with us were pastors of churches who had toiled for decades to reach the community and Christians who went into government service specifically to benefit the community.

In our community, as in many others, numerous people are hard at work. To walk in and act as if no one else has ever done anything is to risk alienating the people who could be your greatest champions.

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Misconception #3: My gifts will be utilized to the fullest.

It’s a joy when our God-given gifts match a human need and bring about transformation. But there will be times when your gifts will not be used. That’s the nature of ministries that reach the neediest of the needy. You may be a musician, expecting to use your music in your ministry. But at the agency where you volunteer, they may need you to push a broom or serve snacks.

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Redefining success

Our call is not to expect success or fixes. Our call is to the faithfulness described in Matthew 25. Christ takes it all personally—every blanket, every cup of soup, every letter written, every visit: “Whatever you did for one of the least of these—you did for me.”

—DEREK PERKINS and RUDY CARRASCO, *codirectors of Harambee Christian Family Center* (www.harambee.org), a nonprofit ministry in Pasadena, California

Discuss

1. What other lessons have you learned about helping people?
2. What would you say to encourage someone to serve, even though it may be difficult?
3. In addition to Matthew 25, what Scriptures encourage you to keep helping others?



In Pursuit of the Perfect Training

5 proven principles from churches that train people well.

Matthew 10

1. Recognize that Training Is Hard Work

Churches who have training programs for their people don't sugar-coat what's required: plenty of time, hard work, and patience. Fully training people takes many hours spread over a long period. In the end, people are attracted not by a system but by a teacher who personifies a cause and is willing to sacrifice his or her self-interest.

How well do we do this? not well 1 2 3 4 5 very well

2. Be Sensitive to Training Resistance

Many people resist training because the work required seems undemanding or because they think common sense, maturity, and life experiences are all a volunteer needs. One pastor asks of people in a training group:

1. "Why are you willing to serve the church in this way?" *The answer indicates the trainee's purity of motive.*
2. "What improvement would you have made in the last job you did for the church?" *This answer will indicate creativity.*
3. "What did you like most about the last job you did for the church?" *The reasons are more important than the answer.*
4. "Describe the best person who worked for or with you." *This will show ability to understand and relate to people.*

How well do we do this? not well 1 2 3 4 5 very well

3. Understand Many People's Feelings of Inferiority

Douglas Johnson, in *The Care and Feeding of Volunteers*, observes: "Volunteers often feel inadequate to deal with church situations. Even though they may be experienced teachers, business persons, or technicians in the non-church world, they know that in the church things are done differently."

To cope with these reluctant feelings, major on in-service training, easing workers into positions of responsibility. One pastor says: "Once lay people reach an elementary level of spiritual maturity, the best training is doing the ministry. They need to be given courage and confidence they can do it."

How well do we do this? not well 1 2 3 4 5 very well

4. Tailor Training Programs

A training program can include private study or group lectures. It can be long or short. It can take place at home, in the parsonage, or at church. The secret is to fit the program to the people.

How well do we do this? not well 1 2 3 4 5 very well

5. Challenge Volunteers

Challenging those who volunteer leads to an increase in the number of volunteers, not a decrease. Make sure people see their task as part of the larger ministry of the church. Then outline what's expected of each volunteer and hold each accountable for completing the task. This makes volunteers view their tasks as important.

How well do we do this? not well 1 2 3 4 5 very well

—TERRY C. MUCK

Discuss

1. In Matthew 10, Jesus trains his twelve disciples. From that chapter, what do we learn about training people?
2. Which of the above principles are we doing best? Why?
3. Which one would you recommend we work on? What specific things could we do to improve?



Your Ministry: An Update

Use this helpful tool to assess your involvement in Christian service

Ephesians 6:7–8; 2 Timothy 2:15

The Ministry

How would you define your ministry in 15 words or less?

How does this mesh with the church's stated mission?

How well is the ministry fulfilling its purpose?

What is your involvement in the ministry, in 15 words or less?

My Involvement

Circle one number for each statement:

I feel energized by this ministry.	agree	1	2	3	4	5	disagree
I feel called to this ministry.		1	2	3	4	5	
I feel spiritually gifted for this ministry.		1	2	3	4	5	
I feel adequately trained for this ministry.		1	2	3	4	5	
I feel there are other ministries I'd be better suited for or enjoy more.		1	2	3	4	5	
I feel others respond positively to my participation/leadership.		1	2	3	4	5	

Feedback from Others

If possible, ask two or three people who know you and the ministry the following:

What do you think of my answers above?

What is going well in this ministry?

What does not seem to be going well, for me or the ministry?

What could I do to improve my service in this ministry?

How can this ministry better fulfill the church's stated purpose?

My Plan

Based on your views and others':

What received the greatest affirmation?

How can I build on this strength? Write a specific goal and completion date.

What received the most suggestions for improvement?

How can I work on this? Write a specific goal and completion date.

What is my prayer as I consider all this?

—ERIC REED



More Slots Than Workers

How do you handle chronic ministry vacancies?

John 15:1–2

The Case With Sunday school, children’s church, and a Wednesday night program, Carla struggled constantly to staff the children’s ministries at Stillmeadow Church. Carla needed 91 workers for the three major ministries. Or she would have, if she had found 91 people able and willing to work every week. She didn’t. So Carla divided some of the jobs into once-a-month obligations. Now she needed 187 workers.

I asked Carla, “Do you have 187 people at Stillmeadow who feel called to work with children?” She rolled her eyes. If even 91 people had been eager to work with children, she would not have had to chop jobs into smaller pieces. Carla knew that some volunteers were helping only because of the worker shortage.

What Would You Do?

- ◆ What is the key issue: “not enough workers” or “too many positions to fill”?
- ◆ If the key issue is “not enough workers,” how would you get more?
- ◆ If the key issue is “too many positions to fill,” how would you reduce the number?

What Happened Carla streamlined the children’s ministry. Though the church had grown to 650 in worship attendance, they were still using a small-church class structure—small classes with solo teachers. Carla combined the children into larger groups of 20 to 30, with each group led by a ministry team including a master teacher.

Even more important, the church moved from three children’s programs—Sunday school, children’s church, and Wednesday activity night—to two. By creating a double-session Sunday school and Wednesday night program incorporating worship, the church went from three mediocre programs to two superb ones, and needed fewer workers.

In restructuring, the 187 slots were cut to just 60. With fewer slots, Carla lined up all the workers for the fall programs by June—a first.

When a ministry has strong, called leadership but not enough volunteers, it is time for a new strategy. Consider these questions:

- ◆ Are there ways to simplify the program, sharpening its focus on doing one or two things very well rather than doing many things?
- ◆ Does this program compete with another ministry for participants or leaders?
- ◆ If so, can the two ministries be combined into a single, stronger ministry?
- ◆ Should enrollment in some programs be capped at a level that does not strain staff and facilities?
- ◆ Does the job description need to be reshaped?
- ◆ Is this position less essential than previously assumed?
- ◆ What is God saying to the church through this vacancy?

Jesus says that fruitful branches are pruned. Pruning hurts, because the loss is real, but its purpose is not to punish; it is to increase fruitfulness.

—EDDY HALL

Discuss

1. Have we ever pruned a ministry? What did we learn from that experience?
2. Which ministries are feeling the strain of “not enough workers”? In these ministries, could we have “too many positions to fill”?
3. What could we do to help those ministries?



Reluctant No More

Helping people who may hesitate to serve.

2 Kings 5:1–4; 1 Kings 19:19–21; Luke 10:38–39; Acts 18:24–26

Read *Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately (Acts 18:24–26).*

Comprehend When I did a Bible study of “ministry,” I found more models than I expected.

For the servant girl who spoke to her master, Naaman, ministry was simply bearing witness: “There is a place where God does business where you can get healed.”

Elijah’s greatest ministry was to disciple Elisha: “Come join me. I won’t be around long. Learn what I know. Do what I do.”

Mary and Martha had a retreat-center ministry. Jesus could come to their home and take off his sandals and eat matzo ball soup and enjoy the company of two women and their brother, Lazarus.

Priscilla and Aquila were two lay people who dared to take on the training of Apollos, a gifted preacher, and say, “Do you understand the theology? We think we can help you improve your ministry.”

All these biblical examples of ministry have at least one thing in common: they show that lay people did—and can do—every one of them.

If none of these kinds of ministry takes professional training, why don’t we find more lay people ministering? I think there are a couple of reasons.

1. *The feeling of inadequacy.* We feel that only those with great wisdom, knowledge, and skill can heal and bless and release people. We think, *Who am I? I’m no Mother Teresa, no Saint Paul!*

We may feel we’re being humble, but it’s really a way to avoid responsibility. To say “I’m only a lay person; I’m not worthy” is copping out. Who is worthy? God says, “Do it!”

2. *Fear of failure.* What if I pray with somebody and there are no visible results? I’m sure that occurred often in the New Testament era, too, but only the miracles were recorded. I once heard Oral Roberts say, “Nobody has ever experienced more unanswered prayers for healing than I have.” We don’t always see immediate answers to our prayers.

So how do inadequate-feeling people launch into ministry? Believe that ministry doesn’t mean having the answers. We all minister from weakness.

—BRUCE LARSON

Discuss

1. What reasons have you heard people give for why they aren’t involved in ministry?
2. What helped you decide to take the risk and minister in some way for Christ?
3. What can our church do to help people overcome their barriers to ministry?



Noble Volunteer or Humble Slave?

The rules change when you go to work for God.

Matthew 20:20–28

Read *“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26–28).*

Comprehend From a human standpoint, the church is a volunteer organization. We have recruiters and outline specific tasks and give strokes to those who volunteer their precious time to work.

But what about God’s standpoint? The church is his kingdom. Volunteer organizations are democracies in which the governed give their consent to the governors, and the consent can be withdrawn whenever the masses wish. Not so in a kingdom. A king doesn’t recruit; he decrees.

And strokes? These are not totally out of place, but neither are they of great importance. With a king and his subjects, it is more like what Jesus said in a parable: “When you have done all that is commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty’” (Luke 17:10, RSV). Slaves and subjects do not give to their Lord. They simply take their hands off what was his in the first place.

One of our great problems is that many Christians want the church to function like a democracy, when it is really a theocracy. Sam Shoemaker illustrated something of this fact with the story of a near-sighted professor who was an expert in entomology. His office walls were covered with pinned and framed insects. One day his students decided to play a practical joke. They took the body of one bug, the legs of another, and the head of yet another and glued them all together.

The specimen was brought to the professor for identification. “What kind of bug is this?” they asked.

The professor eyed the bug closely and replied, “Gentlemen, this is a humbug!”

Shoemaker drew the analogy to a person whose heart belongs to King Jesus, but whose head is run by the world and hands are run by the devil. Hybrid Christians call themselves slaves of Jesus Christ, but they regard themselves as volunteers who serve the church if they so choose.

Once we name the name of Jesus, we cease to be volunteers in the kingdom. We become humble slaves. It is my desire that the church be a place where we surround ourselves with people who will demand much of us and themselves, as together we serve the One who “came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

—BEN PATTERSON

- Discuss**
1. Who comes to mind when you hear the phrase “slave of Jesus Christ”—and why?
 2. If you were trying to get someone to help with a ministry, how would you ask the person if you saw her as a volunteer? How would you ask if you saw the person as a slave of Jesus Christ?
 3. How can we help people understand the difference?



3 Ways to Get People Involved

The secret is encouraging people that they can truly minister

Luke 10:1–2; Ephesians 2:10

1. Let People Tell Stories

Let people tell what God is doing in their lives. Once I led a retreat at which elders told their remarkable stories. One man told about having two of his daughters killed in separate car accidents, one involving a drunk driver. He and his wife have survived, and the miracle is, they're not bitter. By the end of the story, many were tearful.

A second man had been through a divorce. He is now happily remarried, but he talked about the pain of divorce: "You never get over the pain. The pain is always there."

Everyone got to share his or her story—"This is where I'm coming from ... where God found me ... where I am now ... where my pain is ... where God is leading me."

Such modeling shows people that ministry begins in weakness, not strength. That releases them to minister to one another with less fear of inadequacy.

2. Limit the Essential Qualifications

I don't like to have an elaborate screening process, but people must answer three crucial questions affirmatively before I believe they are qualified to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit.

1. Do you have a relationship with Jesus Christ? The church is full of people who believe in Jesus but have never met him. The relevant question isn't, "Do you believe Jesus died on the cross?" The Devil believes that much. The question Jesus asks his disciples is, "Do you love me?"
2. "Will you love one another as I have loved you?" is also a question Jesus asks his disciples. Jesus asks, "Are you willing to love this family of believers I have put you with?"
3. Will you go into the world in Jesus' name? If we're willing to go as God's representative to any place and anyone, God will place us in ministry.

3. Encourage Risk Taking

Jesus sent out his disciples—not just the Twelve, but also the seventy-two—prematurely, they may have felt. "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves," he said. He told them to heal the sick, to cast out evil spirits, to preach the kingdom of God.

He sent them out two by two. Alone, they would have been too scared; they wouldn't have taken the risk.

Jesus shows us that an essential step in preparing people to minister is to encourage them to take risks, to go places where they may fail unless God intervenes.

—BRUCE LARSON

Discuss

1. What exactly does it mean that "ministry begins in weakness, not strength"? What does it not mean?
2. What are our stated qualifications for ministry? The unstated ones? To you, which are essential?
3. How can we encourage people to take risks in ministry?



How to Write a Ministry “Job Description”

The amazing power of a simple tool.

Proverbs 21:5; Luke 14:28–32

“Donna, will you work on the mission program?”

“Well, I guess so.”

“Good. It’s all settled then.”

This conversation is almost guaranteed to lead to unmet expectations, missed deadlines, overspent budgets, and angry or disappointed workers. Why? It doesn’t address critical questions such as “What does ‘work on’ mean?” “When is this program to be done?” “Is there a budget?” “To whom will I be responsible?”

Many of us who are active in churches, however, may have some hang-ups about asking these questions or pinning down the details. That’s why, a few years ago, our church developed job descriptions for standing committees and individual tasks. Not everyone was immediately enthusiastic about writing up job descriptions for church work. It takes time and to some people, seems too cut-and-dried for church.

But our chairman reported after the first descriptions were written, “People want to know what’s expected of them. When they understand a job, they are more willing to say yes.”

Writing the descriptions

It’s not enough to say to committee chairpersons, “Write a job description for your work.” Most put that assignment at the bottom of their agendas. So we scheduled a meeting in which the only business was explaining the purpose of job descriptions and writing them. We passed out a standard form, on which committees filled in the needed information. Here’s an example of a completed job description:

Ministry Position: Sharing time leader

Responsible To: Sharing time coordinator

Duties: Prepare lessons and direct activities each week; enlist helpers when needed; provide snacks (church reimburses cost)

Skills: Willingness to work with children; Ability to lead a group of children; Creativity.

Time Required: 11:15-12:15 each Sunday for 2-6 Sundays, plus preparation time

Training: Sharing time coordinator; Christian education staff liaison; workshops when available

Tips

Make verbs precise: *prepare*, *enlist*, and *provide*, for example.

State who is responsible for preparing the particular budget and handling expenditures.

State the time required, or for a one-time job, state the deadline.

For a committee’s job description, state what decisions the group can and cannot make.

Each year, ask committees to revise their job descriptions, because the jobs change and because people gradually improve their job-describing skills. Use a loose-leaf notebook so new pages easily can be added.

—BETSY HUMPHREYS

Discuss

1. What do you see as the potential benefits of having job descriptions for church work? The potential problems?
2. For people who may not like job descriptions, what would you say to encourage them to reconsider their position?
3. After reading and discussing this, what should our next step be?



Keys to Long-term Successful Service

4 biblical principles to keep people serving well.

Romans 16:1–12; 1 Corinthians 3:7–11

Even the most committed workers can become “weary in well doing.” Here are biblical principles that can help prevent burnout and frustration.

1. Think empathetically. When we learn to put ourselves in volunteers’ shoes and sit where they sit (Ezekiel 3:15), we gain respect for people’s schedules and guard against their overinvolvement. As far as I’m concerned, the unwritten motto of ministry should be: One Person, One Ministry. That may be unrealistic, but it gives us a goal and keeps us sensitive to the demands on people.

2. Create systems. Remember Nehemiah? He understood organization, dividing the construction of the city wall into manageable sections with clearly defined tasks. Because the workers understood their part, the wall went up. Local churches are difficult places to create efficient systems, but we’ve found several things that help:

- ◆ Taking periodic retreats with staff members or lay leaders to consider the organizational effectiveness of our church ministries.
- ◆ Developing organizational charts (a simpler task than it sounds, thanks to computer software).
- ◆ Examining the causes of systems failure to avoid recurring problems.

3. Reduce friction. Interpersonal conflict is a primary cause of burnout, so we strive to mediate or prevent conflict, taking our cues from the loyal yokefellow in Philippians 4:2-3: “I urge Euodia and Syntyche to iron out their differences and make up. Syzygus, since you’re right there to help them work things out, do your best with them” (The Message).

4. Give recognition. Paul’s example in Romans 16 compelled us to create opportunities to honor our church’s workers. Though we can’t do these kinds of things every week, here are some ideas:

- ◆ An annual Lay Ministry Sunday with videos, testimonies, sermons, and sometimes a staff-hosted dinner for recognizing faithful workers.
- ◆ Videos of special events, sometimes featuring our workers.
- ◆ Profiles of volunteers in our church newsletter.
- ◆ Notes, calls, words of love, and lots of hugs from staff and members.
- ◆ An annual Lay Minister of the Year award.

—ROBERT J. MORGAN

Discuss

1. Is One Person, One Ministry a realistic motto for our church? What steps could we take to make the motto a reality? If specific obstacles make One Person, One Ministry unrealistic, what can we do to move toward the spirit of the motto?
2. What systems do we have in place to lighten the load on people?
3. What specifically can we do to prevent, reduce, or mediate conflict in the church?
4. What can we do to recognize people who serve?



Further Exploration

9 helpful resources in 3 categories.

DEVELOPING OTHERS

LEADERSHIP Journal: *Developing Leaders*

The premier practical journal for church leaders devoted an issue to “Developing Leaders,” which includes helpful interviews with Marlene Wilson and John Maxwell. Read these issues online for free:

www.leadershipjournal.net, click on “Archives,” and scroll down and click on the issue.

Growing Your Church through Training and Motivation *edited by Marshall Shelley.*

Contains 30 chapters of seasoned wisdom from Leith Anderson, Don Cousins, Jack Hayford, Roberta Hestenes, John Maxwell, and many others (Bethany House, 1997; ISBN 1556619677).

How to Mobilize Church Volunteers *by Marlene Wilson*

An authority in the field of volunteer management offers help with recruiting, training, and motivating people (ISBN 0806620129).

DISCOVERING YOUR GIFTS

2000 What Color is Your Parachute *by Richard Nelson Bolles*

Fortune magazine called this the gold standard of career guides, and for good reason (Ten Speed Press, 2000; ISBN 1580081231; available at Amazon.com).

Lifekeys: Discovering Who You Are, Why You’re Here, What You Do Best *by Jane A. G. Kise, David Stark, and Sandra Krebs Hirsh*

Stories, self-tests, and inventories (Bethany, 1996; ISBN 1556618719; available at Amazon.com).

What You Do Best *by Bruce L. Bugbee*

(Zondervan, 1995; ISBN 0310494311).

CHURCH KITS AND WORKBOOKS

Network *by Bruce L. Bugbee, Don Cousins, and Bill Hybels*

A proven approach to getting the right people in the right places for the right reasons. The complete kit (\$179) includes videos, workbooks, and more (Zondervan; ISBN 0-310-41228-5). For related resources and services, contact Network Ministries International at 800-588-8833 or www.networkministries.com.

The Starter Kit for Mobilizing Ministry *by Leadership Training Network*

This notebook lays out a seven-step process for lay mobilization. It also contains an extensive list of lay-training resources. For related resources and services, contact Leadership Training Network at 877-LTN-LEAD or www.ltn.org.

Mobilizing Spiritual Gifts Series *by Paul R. Ford*

Workbooks for leaders, students, and mentors to help a church mobilize people according to spiritual gifts. Available at www.ChurchSmart.com.



Sample Retreat Schedule

How to create a weekend retreat on the theme of “Volunteer Development.”

BUILDING CHURCH LEADERS expands easily into a retreat format. Before you plan your retreat, think about which aspect of “Volunteer Development” you want to emphasize:

If your need is

Convincing lay people they really can serve.

Helping people identify their God-given abilities

Finding enough workers

Setting up structures that support serving throughout your church

Reducing friction and confusion among workers

Adjusting people’s attitudes about Christian service

then use these handouts

Reluctant No More (page 10)

3 Ways to Get People Involved (page 12)

The Right People in the Right Places (pages 4-5)

Declaring and Owning Your Strengths (page 15)

More Slots than Workers (page 9)

3 Ways to Get People Involved (page 12)

Keys to Long-term Successful Service (page 14)

The Right People in the Right Places (pages 4-5)

How to Write a Ministry ‘Job Description’ (p 13)

Keys to Long-term Successful Service (page 14)

Noble Volunteer or Humble Slave? (page 11)

3 Myths about Christian Service (page 6)

Here is a sample retreat schedule you may follow, using the two or three handouts you identified as most important for your church right now.

Friday Evening

- ◆ 8–8:45 P.M. **Opening Session:** Hand out copies of “The Right People in the Right Places,” the interview with Bruce Bugbee on pages 4-5, and allow time for each person to read it. Then form groups of three or four. Have each group discuss the questions at the bottom of the page. Reconvene for the last 20 minutes and have the groups share their comments and consider what it may mean for the church.
- ◆ 9–9:45 P.M. **Elective Session 1:** Distribute copies of the first handout you identified. Explain why you selected this handout and how discussing it can help your church. Discuss the questions at the bottom of the page.

Saturday Morning

- ◆ 9–9:45 A.M. **Bible Study:** Start the morning with “Bringing Out Their Best,” an inductive Bible study on page 3 You can either photocopy and pass out the study or use the handout as your notes.
- ◆ 10–11 A.M. **Activity:** Do the activity, “Declaring and Owning Your Strengths” on page 15 which will help your group draw closer together.
- ◆ 11 A.M.–NOON. **Elective Session 2:** Distribute and discuss the second handout you identified.
- ◆ NOON–Lunch.

Saturday Afternoon

- ◆ 1–2 P.M. **Elective Session 3:** Close the retreat with another handout targeted to your church’s needs. Following the discussion, ask, “What is one thing we can commit to as a group to help people in our church to serve?” Pray together, asking God for guidance and wisdom as you take these new steps together.