

How to Recruit – and how NOT to Recruit – for a Congregational Ministry Need

Don't use guilt, arm-twisting, begging, desperation, or bait and switch.

- “You should do it because . . .”
- “Won't you *please* help . . .”
- “I don't know what I'll do if you don't help . . .”
- “You're my last hope . . .”
- “There's nothing to it . . .”

They don't work for finding qualified people who will want to do the task.

They don't fit the biblical model (I Cor. 12; Romans 12) of each member doing that for which God designed them.

A better way to recruit is within a congregation-wide system and culture that views recruiting as one small part of the bigger picture of equipping people to serve and includes:

- frequent teaching on how all are gifted by God and called to service
- opportunities for people to discover their gifts and discuss ministry opportunities
- careful record-keeping and follow-up to all commitments/inquiries
- ministry groups that welcome and train newcomers
- ongoing support, conflict resolution and affirmation for all workers
- staff whose calling is to help the laity serve as God has called them

With that background, here are some steps for recruiting for a specific ministry need:

1. Pray. Start with prayer and bathe the process in prayer. You're seeking one of God's people, gifted by him, to do one of his tasks. It's not about you.
2. Slow down. Taking time to find the right person generally increases the amount of time before you need to recruit for this position again.
3. Write a job description. Include details of the task, time required, why it's important, qualifications needed, benefits it gives the volunteer, who supervises the position, etc.
4. Cast the net wide. Make general announcements (bulletin, newsletter) as appropriate. Use wording that emphasizes the positives--while maintaining honesty!
5. Now the real work begins. Compile a list of people who may be gifted/qualified for this task. Ask others for their prayerful suggestions. Look beyond the 'usuals.'



6. Contact with each person intentionally (not “by the way...”) and personally. Explain the task and why they were asked. Ask them to pray and think about it. Agree on time when you’ll get back to them.
7. If the answer is no, accept it graciously. Listen for their reasons. Can the task be adapted to their needs? If they give insight into other tasks they would like to do, follow-up or make sure someone else does. Ask them also if they know anyone else with the gifts for this position.
8. When it’s still hard to recruit for a certain position, consider whether the job can be done in a different way; or whether that particular task needs to be done at all.

Recruitment is extending an invitation to consider a ministry opportunity. Make it a winsome invitation, thoughtfully extended to specific people for the right reasons. Ask God to use your efforts to accomplish his purposes in his way.

