

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS*

Almost all ministries of the church require lay or volunteer participation. Make sure you carefully explain the task you are asking a volunteer to do. A clear challenge produces more volunteers than an ambiguous one.

Many leaders shy away from inviting people to volunteer because they are never quite sure how to ask in the best way. It is not difficult—but it does require forethought and a belief that what you are asking the volunteer to do is worthwhile.

These phrases *do not* belong in your invitation to a potential volunteer:

"I know you're busy, but. . ."

"Would you mind doing a little thing for our program?"

"We're desperate for new people to help us. We really need you to say yes."

"Could you at all possibly do this?"

"We can't find anybody else to do it. . ."

Here are some simple, clear phrases that *do* belong in an invitation to a potential volunteer:

"We are looking for someone with real gifts in this area for this responsibility."

"Do you have interests in this area?"

"How can we help you contribute some of your many talents to Sunday School?"

"I've observed that you seem to be gifted in this area."

When issuing an invitation, never apologize. For example: "I can guess that you are too busy to help us, but I'd like to ask anyway. . ." By apologizing, you communicate the thought that the potential volunteers have something more important to do or that what you are asking them to do is not worthwhile. Make your invitation to the volunteers positive, simple, and straightforward.

Here are three things volunteers want to know:

1. Is it meaningful? Does it fulfill God's plan? Will I have a sense of significance?
2. Will I have authority and structure? What is the chain of command? Will I have the freedom to get things done?
3. What about training? Will someone help me learn to do what I've been asked to do?

Remember to care for the individuals you ask to volunteer, whether they accept or decline your request. God's love can reach through your willingness to listen, support, and understand those with whom you minister. Your willingness to form a relationship with the volunteers and to appreciate their work and family situations may strengthen and empower them for future, transforming service.

* Taken from *Women's Ministries Handbook for Leaders*.