

Building Your Ministry Team: Breadth & Balance

Pray – And Recruit

So you have just been appointed the new Stewardship Chair ... or it's April and you haven't yet thought about the fall pledge drive: What to do? The first thing – the very first thing to do – is *pray*. God may have a few suggestions for you! However, once you have done that, begin immediately to assemble your team. It takes a while to discern who is called and have the heartfelt conversations that get you the “yesses” you want.

Recruiting is more than placing an invitation in the church newsletter or bulletin for “anyone interested in serving on the Stewardship Team to call (insert name of committee chair).” Remember that you want both *breadth* (representation from many areas of ministry) and *balance* (a variety of gifts and working styles).

If your congregation has commission of ministry chairs, or Ministry Catalysts, or other coordinated group of active ministry leaders, start by brainstorming with them. How do they understand the relationship between stewardship and their ministries? Who is good at telling the stories of how their ministries transform lives? Who would be willing to be part of your effort to get the story out?

Think also about the skills you will need to do the work and the members of the congregation who possess those abilities. Consider the following suggestions, and feel free to adapt the list to meet the unique gifts and needs of your congregation.

Committee / Team Roles

Recruiter.

This is someone who is not shy about asking others to do things, and will probably be the most important member of the group. If you as chair are not good at this, try to fill this slot first. (Please note: Do not settle for the “hopeless asker” in your congregation, the person whose frequent pleas – with whining, nagging, hopeless overtones – for volunteers and other resources fall consistently on deaf ears.) Get the person you hate to have ask you to do something – because you know you are going to say yes (but you always sort of like doing the job anyway).

Organizer.

A person who loves lists and calendars and who has an eye for details. They may nag sometimes, and you may tease them about it, but when they are on board, everyone feels a little safer and knows the project will come off smoothly.

Communicator.

Look for someone who enjoys making printed materials look attractive and is fluent in social media. This may be a good invitation for a younger person to take leadership.

welcoming
generous
prayerful
growing
diverse
vibrant
be:loved:community

The Right Reverend Marc
Handley Andrus, Bishop

The Reverend Canon Michael
Barlowe, Area and Congrega-
tional Ministries

Julia McCray-Goldsmith,
Working Group Head for
Discipleship Ministries

Jennifer Snow, Associate for
Discipleship Ministries

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Liturgist.

An individual who will write prayers and help plan special campaign liturgies (like a commissioning service for campaign workers.) This role frequently appeals to the quiet and contemplative types who might otherwise never be involved in stewardship.

Witness.

Someone who has reflected deeply with their own stewardship and can talk about it in public. Some people are naturals at this, but most of us need practice. That's where tools like *Public Narrative* can help.

Party Giver.

Look for the person whose invitations have you looking forward to their parties. They will probably have a circle of friends capable of helping. Be prepared to sit through discussions of color schemes, table decorations and angst over the budget. You can also expect to have a good time!

Creative.

Someone who thinks outside the box. They don't have to be well organized about it, they just need ideas. A truly great creative will look at things a little differently than the rest of the group and may not be easily understood. Be prepared to be patient. (*Hint:* It helps if they are a little bit nuts.)

Cheerful Workers.

You need at least two people who will cheerfully (or sort of) set up tables, haul chairs, mount banners, copy, staple, collate, stuff envelopes, haul trash, and generally see that the work gets done. If all you have are thinkers who are too good to sweat, expect your grand schemes to fall far short of their potential. These people are pure gold. Treat them accordingly.

Recruiting Tips

A recruiting call is almost identical to an every member canvass call. The following are some additional suggestions that should assist you in building an effective team.

1. *Ask God for help.* Pray for wisdom about identifying committee prospects and assistance in recruiting them. Ask God to help you issue the invitation.
2. *Remember Jesus' example.* He recruited the Twelve one at a time, face to face. Imagine what would have happened if He had run a request for volunteers in the Temple newsletter!

3. *Tell them the work is important.* Most of us are busy. Who has time for an unimportant job?
4. *Tell them the work may be challenging.* If it is so easy that anyone can do it, ask someone else. Remember, I'm busy and have to be selective about commitments.
5. *Tell them they have the ability to do the work well.* If they do not have the skills to do the work, you would not have asked them to do it.
6. *Give them a job description and be specific about the time required.* If you expect to meet for two hours each month, say so.
7. *Set term limits on the commitment.* People are more willing to say "yes" if they know it's for a year than when they are afraid they may be stuck for life. You can always ask them to re-enlist.
8. *Offer training opportunities.* This is an investment in their formation as stewards.
9. *Think "discernment."* And ask every member of the committee to do the same. Look for signs of interest in other members of the congregation. New members may be invited to join the group any time. Ask members of the group to be attentive to persons who express interest in your work or have skills you need. Encourage the notion that recruitment is everyone's job: that great committee members help fill the pipeline with new talent.
11. *Say "thank you" often and in diverse ways.* Acknowledge volunteer efforts in your newsletter. It helps if you are specific about what they did. (Example: Thanks to Yvonne for beautiful table decorations and to Paul for setting up the tables.) Personal notes of thanks help a lot, once people get over the shock of receiving one. This may be the most important tip. People who are appreciated enjoy their work. Committees who are thanked can find recruits.
12. *As in all things and most especially, give thanks to God.*

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