

10

STEPS

**to Give Every Volunteer
What They Need**

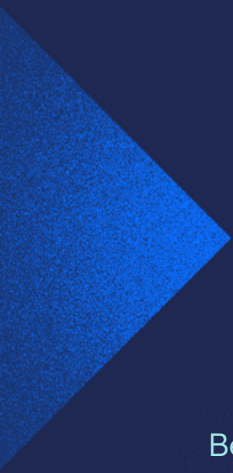


Pushpay

Develop Your Volunteers into Leaders that Won't Quit

We recently did an analysis of all of our churches, looking for patterns in volunteer involvement. We looked at how many people volunteered in one year and how many were still volunteering the next year. **As it turns out, we found that on average of three out of every 10 volunteers stops serving each year.**

Since our mission is helping churches build great volunteer teams, we added features to our software that simplify the process of scheduling, responding, and signing up to volunteer. We want churches to thrive, as people move deeper in their relationships with Jesus. So, here are some tips we've seen and used to help churches recruit and retain volunteers.



Get Prepared to Recruit

Before asking people to volunteer, it's helpful to establish a foundation that sets both you and your volunteers up for success.

Establish a Path

Every leader wants to make and grow disciples, but how that happens varies from church to church. If we are constantly calling our congregation to take the next step of faith, we need to make sure there's a clear discipleship path. That way every task you do will be an intentional, valuable use of your time and energy.

Pro Tip

Require every serving environment in your church to have entry-level positions, where anyone can serve no matter their spiritual stage, background, or church experience.

Make it extremely easy for people to get connected by making sure each step in the process informs and guides them to the next place to get involved. Call people to serve from the stage, tell them where to go (i.e, sign up to volunteer at the connection table), give them job descriptions for the area they want to volunteer in, and include contact information for those who show interest. Make each step of the process painfully clear. What often feels like communication overkill to a leader is the perfect amount of communication for a church member.

Have Qualifications / Requirements

Attendance, weekly worship, or being a part of a small group are requirements that you can build into your volunteer roles. The mark of a good discipleship pathway is having a next step available for everyone.

Pro Tip

Use [Process Queues](#) within ChurchStaq and know where your people are in their discipleship journey. With Process Queues you can make personal invitations to each person's next step.

That being said, serving is not a replacement for spiritual growth. Serving is one step of our growth. Being in an authentic community with others, worshipping God alongside other believers, and even giving or tithing are other pieces of our spiritual growth. Be sure that no one replaces their growth and community with volunteerism.

Clarify Roles

It's not hard for church leaders to identify the volunteer roles that need filling - some of us lie awake at night thinking about all of them! But that's only half the battle. It's important for people to know not just that the church needs more children's ministry volunteers, for instance, but what exactly those roles entail. For each volunteer role in your church, write out a description that includes the time commitment and characteristics, skills, or passions that are ideal for the role. You can add these into a church management system to create a list of needs. Whether digital or on paper, a full description clarifies expectations. Have your volunteers read and sign the role description to show their commitment and understanding of the expectations.

Be clear and honest about the time each role will require. For instance, a youth group might meet from 7 pm to 9 pm, but that's never the full picture. What if small group time consistently runs long or maybe the students or other leaders hang-out or play games late? When you clearly let your volunteers know what is optional and what is necessary, staying until 9:30pm will not be an extra burden. However, "surprise" late nights could leave your volunteers feeling overwhelmed and lead to burnout.

Get organized

People need to know their roles and have healthy expectations of what

the role will look like. If this is done well, your people will stick around. If there's a lack of process, they won't. Have volunteer schedules up-to-date and active. Use a simple [scheduling tool](#) that allows volunteers to respond to serving opportunities. Make sure there's a clear line of communication. And if you struggle with organization, find someone who doesn't. Assign the organizational responsibility to a volunteer. If using your current software doesn't work, find a new software OR use something even more simple like a Facebook group or group text.

Pro Tip

Aligning your team is key. ChurchStaq has volunteer management tools to simplify the process of volunteer recruitment and [engagement](#). This allows you to accomplish more in less time while giving you the means to quickly organize your volunteers to serve and communicate with them.

Know Your Strengths and Own Your Weaknesses

Leaders often feel the pressure to be good at everything, but 1) that's not biblical and 2) it's not realistic! Great leaders know what they can do, and empower those who can do what they can't. If we recruit well and manage expectations, people will be ready to serve. Once they are, make sure to put them in roles where they're using the gifts God has given them to grow your ministry. *The SHAPE Assessment is a great resource to discover skills and talents. Google 'Shape assessment' to discover options - several are free!*

Pro Tip

The Church Management Software (ChMS) in ChurchStaq allows you to keep an eye on your people's engagement. This will give you an understanding of what's resonating with each congregant based on critical performance metrics and insights. So you'll be able to provide them with opportunities based on their interests.

Take an incredible worship leader, for example. He's super Godly, loves helping people worship, is extremely selfless, and, like many worship leaders, extremely unorganized. Yet, he was put in charge of running the schedule. As you can imagine, this created chaos because he wasn't consistent or organized. The truth is, even if this worship leader spent hours of time and effort trying to be organized, he would never be great at it. It just wasn't him. If only he'd recruited a volunteer who could work as an administrator, someone who loved organizing chaos and was good at managing a million things at once. How far could the team have gone?

Delegate and Replace Yourself

As your ministry grows, so will your leadership responsibilities, which is why a great leader learns to replace themselves. As you gain new responsibilities, be sure to hand off old ones.

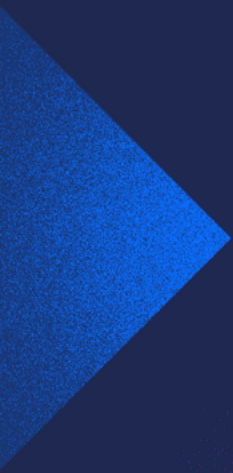
Pro Tip

Schedule a coffee, lunch, or review session 90 days after a volunteer begins. Be sure to ask these questions – they'll provide another view into your ministry and will also give you an opportunity to encourage those volunteers to take another step:

- What have you loved?
- What has been your biggest challenge?
- What areas do you see we could improve?
- How would you like to move forward?

Consider this: What are you doing that someone else can do, that's keeping you from doing what only you can do?

Great leaders model delegating and replacing themselves, encouraging their volunteers to do the same. Leave being the hero to Jesus and call your volunteers into serving through healthy delegation. We're called to be the body of Christ as a team, not in isolation.



Personal Conversation Before Assignment

Once you've established your needs and have willing volunteers, make sure to schedule one-on-one conversations with your team. Resist the urge to accept willing bodies and throw them into their roles. Take time to have a personal conversation, set expectations, and establish a positive line of communication.

Set Expectations

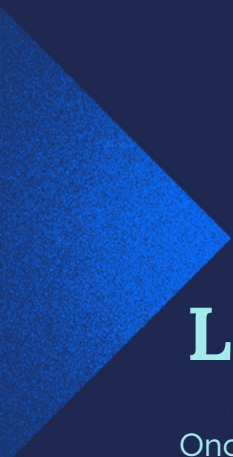
You'd be surprised at how many people show up to volunteer thinking they're going to be the hero and they leave as soon as it gets hard. A pastor once said, everyone wants to serve until they're treated like a servant. Especially with today's "me first" mentality, it's important to set a solid foundation for volunteers before they get their first assignment. Make sure to say things like:

- This has to be about Jesus or you're going to burn out.
- God doesn't need you to be talented, just obedient. This is about serving Him!
- No one is above anything. Every contribution matters, regardless if it's acknowledged.
- And maybe most important, "Let me know if you ever need anything."

Obviously, put those phrases into terms that feel natural for you, but it's important to make sure people know the "why" behind volunteering. It's an honor to be used in the bigger story - we all can use a reminder from time to time. A well-written role description goes a long way to volunteer satisfaction. Your coordinator role description is a great document to begin writing now.

Pro Tip

Build training into your church's volunteer program by utilizing the [Schedules](#) feature within ChurchStaq. It will provide you with the tools to successfully on board and train volunteers, so that potential recruits know that your church stands behind those who are willing to serve



Structure For Long-Term Success

Once your volunteers are recruited and trained well, they will be fired up and ready to go. Without some timely, personal communication and continued leadership, even the most excited volunteers can find themselves getting burned out and frustrated.

Get Small and Establish Communication Paths

The best churches, no matter the size, stay small. As your church grows, you will have volunteer leaders leading volunteers. You might even add leaders that lead leaders that lead volunteers. Do your best to make sure there are as few volunteers under a volunteer leader as possible.

Pro Tip

It's vital to understand who is serving in your church, and our [Volunteer Schedule](#) feature is a great way to accomplish this. It's also important to know if your volunteers are showing up and maintaining their serving commitments.

Create a clear line of communication. Where and to whom do volunteers check-in and report issues? Who is checking in with volunteers on a consistent basis? By utilizing groups in Pushpay's LEAD app, communication is a breeze! As you set up leaders within ministry teams, add their team members as a group. Serving together is a great opportunity to establish another sense of community. Break up your large groups into smaller pods to help enforce accountability, and bring things to light that might go unnoticed. One of your volunteers could share with you how someone has been struggling because they're not plugged into a small group even though they've volunteered for three months. Information comes to light when you have actual accountability instead of one coordinator trying to organize AND care for 50 people. Know your limits, use your resources.

Allow and Encourage Your Volunteers to Improve Your Ministry

Give your volunteers a voice, and have a way for them to give feedback as well as make suggestions. Doing this can make it feel like they're a part of the team, not just a cog in a wheel. Empower your volunteers to help

solve the problems they bring up. Let them have a voice in the issue and delegate and empower them to help improve your ministry by giving them responsibilities. This makes people feel accountable for the ministry, which is a leader's dream.

Create a communication rhythm. On a weekly basis, communicate updates, special announcements, or changes to the weekend plan and to celebrate wins. Pushpay allows you to text your groups or teams or send [rich push notifications](#) to create impactful messages that increase engagement with your app.

Don't Be Afraid to Make the First Move

Always be watching for people naturally using their abilities and make direct asks. "Hey, I've seen you talking with first time guests who come in the door and think you'd be a great fit for one of our greeters!" Notice how this calls them to a role based on something they've already done? It shows you are paying attention.

Pro Tip

Challenge your small group leaders by giving them the assignment. They should know their people AND be able to suggest good places for them to serve based on their gifts, skills, and personalities.

It's also great practice to lead your volunteers to find their own replacements. Instead of one volunteer coordinator, have your volunteers be recruiters. You can start by having them serve with their friends for a few Sundays and then you can split them up. We've seen volunteers eventually responsible for an entire preschool ministry, and it came from a friend inviting her to serve. You never know!

With these few simple steps, you will soon be a volunteer management rocket scientist. People are the greatest asset in every church. Steward them wisely and your impact will be multiplied.

ChurchStaq's [scheduling feature](#) will cut your scheduling time in half. The software can also support clear communication with automated reminders and easy-to-respond to volunteer assignments. In the time you save, you can make more personal connections with your volunteers. Discover more about our [scheduling feature](#).