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# How To Serve Volunteer Events Effectively

It's no secret that planning an event takes adequate attention to detail. Weddings have to be planned months in advance and hosting a holiday party begins long before the seasons have even begun to shift. Similar steps have to be taken when planning volunteer events at your church. Having the skills to plan and execute a church event successfully will turn you into one of the most sought after people in your congregation.

Here are 3 tips to help you serve volunteer events effectively:

## **1. Define the when**

Preceding the event, sit down with the ministry team that is in charge and ask as many questions as possible. Different events attract different types of people which all require unique approaches to guest service. Use this information to determine exactly what your role will be. The nature of the event, budget, and mechanics should be the three primary factors that guide your questions about the event.

## **2. Develop your systems**

Specifically develop your systems for determining, inviting, assigning and training volunteers. Don't assume that you can have all of your regular weekend volunteers serve in this event. Use this as an opportunity for others to step up. In order to make sure you have the right volunteers in the right spot you need to figure out which teams are needed. Then handpick your team leaders and key volunteers. Use this event to push service opportunities. Don't forget to communicate with everyone who is involved in the event. Lastly, make sure you prepare for every contingency.

### **3. Debrief the event**

Spending time after the event thinking through what went well and what didn't is key to the success of future events. When debriefing the event, start by doing an after-action report. This is a file that consists of best practices, actual timelines, to-do lists and things that did not have a contingency plan before the event. Next you should contact your volunteers. Thank them for serving and then ask for their version of the after-action report. These generally have valuable input from people who were on the front lines of the event. Another key part of debriefing the event is a group debrief. This involves the event planning team sitting down to talk through details of the event. One thing to remember when working with volunteers is to show your gratitude. Finally, offer any new volunteers the opportunity to become a regular part of the guest service team. Use the event to turn connected people into committed people.

Take these steps when serving your next event and see the difference that it makes in your own planning process as well as in the hearts of the volunteers you are overseeing.

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