



Prairie Lane Press

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The Church's Most Valuable Resource— *Volunteers*

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Many in the congregation are aware that I have a couple of pastor groups that I occasionally meet with. The “KEZ” is a joint gathering of RCA and CRC pastors in Eastern Nebraska. It is a good place for me to learn from others.

At a recent KEZ meeting, I was talking with Pastor Scott from Westwood Church about ministry. He made a wise observation that went something like this: ***“Volunteers are the most important resource churches have now. At one time, maybe having enough money and meeting budgets was the most valuable resource for churches to have. Today, most churches can find enough donations to keep functioning. But, volunteers are harder to come by. Most churches can only go as far as where the volunteers will take them.”***

I think Pastor Scott is right. Time is a very precious commodity and people do not have enough of it. For some people, it is a greater sacrifice to give time than it is to give money. But, churches rely heavily on volunteer time. New programs and new ministries will almost always require more volunteers. So, even if a church comes up with a great idea and money is available to fund it, the idea wouldn't go any further without the volunteers to make the program happen.

As I think about the last few years at Prairie Lane Church, I know that we have added some new programs. This is a sign of health, and I am so thankful for all the people who help in many ways. *Stephen's Ministry* is a great program to fit a need in our church for longer-term care-giving. It requires a significant amount of time for training and care-giving. *LIFEhouse* is another new program just a couple of years old. It requires significant time for the board members, and extra help when the pantry is open. We now have *lunches* once a month on Sundays. We are looking for *youth mentors and triad leaders* for discipleship. Plus, we still have the weekly commitments of *GEMs* and *Cadets*, the seasonal programs of *VBS* and *Christmas program*, and so much more. (I came up with a list of various ministries and activities that require the time of volunteers. It is included on the reverse side).

I am feeling like right now our church is about maxed out. Before we can add more programs we are going to have to add more volunteers. It does not necessarily mean that we need to add more people into the church, although that is one solution. **But, another solution is to better engage, equip and empower those that are already here.** Some people at church are at their maximum when it comes to volunteer hours—but not everyone is. Others are waiting to be asked. Some are not currently involved, but could be. And, we need you. As a church, we can only go as far as our volunteers will take us. You are the most precious resource.

In Acts 6 we have the story of the apostle's appointing the first deacons to help with the work of ministry. In verse 4, we see that the apostle wanted to devote themselves to the ministry of the Word and to prayer and not lose their focus on other jobs. But, that is not all the apostles are doing in this story. They also need to find the 7 deacons. They looked for people full of the Spirit and of wisdom. Then, they empowered these 7 to do the work and prayed for them.

From this story, I recognize the crucial importance of the ministry of the Word and prayer in my work; but it is a part of my job also to help find willing helpers, to empower them, and bless and support them in their work too. If you ever feel under-used, or that your talents and abilities are unappreciated, please talk to me about that; one of the jobs of a pastor is to help God's people find a place to serve.

And, thank you to all the dedicated volunteers at Prairie Lane. This month of Thanksgiving, I want to be sure to let you know that I am thankful for you!

Current List of PLC Volunteer Ministries & Activities

Committees:

- Admin Council
- Elder and Deacons
- Care Giving Team /Stephen's Ministry
- LIFEhouse board
- Worship Planners
- Church Safety Team

- Church lawn mowing

Serving Others

- LIFEhouse pantry dates & special events
- neighborhood gutter cleaning
- AA pizza night

Sunday Morning Services:

- Praise Team
- Sound Techs / Power Point
- Children's Worship
- Nursery
- Usher / Greeter
- Coffee / Refreshments

Financial / Administration:

- church treasurer & assistant
- Offering counters (deacon + former deacons)

Children / Youth Ministries:

- Sunday School
- GEMs and Cadets
- VBS + middle school VBS
- Christmas Play
- Youth mentoring
- Heart and Hands

Special Events and Misc. :

- prayer & praise worship services
- showers, funerals, etc.
- Christmas decorating /clean-up
- church choir
- men's quartet

Small Groups and Discipleship:

- LIFEgroups and Daybreak
- FUSION young adults
- Adult Sunday School
- Tri-ad groups
- membership and profession of faith classes

Fellowship:

- Once a month food teams - lunches
- Sunday evening game night (5th Sundays)
- Dinner groups
- PLC Thanksgiving meal
- PLC camping trip
- softball team
- hobby groups

Facilities

- Building and Grounds work days and projects