

Pray for what??

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“Pray for volunteers.” Easy enough to say that. But what do you pray for? More warm bodies? More eager faces? More “what do you need, I’ll do anything” types?

Prayers like that might serve your short term purposes, but they contribute very little to your goals of building up members of the Body of Christ and equipping them to serve.

Kristi's post about God providing a volunteer "just in time" wasn't about meeting her personal need for help. It was about that funny thing we do to ourselves -- being surprised when God actually answers a very specific prayer or, even better, sets the answer in motion before we think to pray.

But let's say that you are asking and expecting God's answer. What then?

Take a look at the Living Sacrifices verse in Romans 12:1 and the passage that follows:

- 1.** Pray for volunteers who show up willingly to serve the Lord (v.1). Ask God for people who get their bodies there even when it demands a personal cost. Ask Him for “holy sacrifices” -- those who examine their intentions and let God work on their priorities.
- 2.** Pray for volunteers who leave the world’s way of doing things behind (v. 2) -- who search scripture to know how Jesus wants them to accomplish the work of His kingdom. Ask God for volunteers who expect to be trained and mentored. Then, pray for your praying and mentoring.
- 3.** Pray for volunteers who work well with others (v. 3). They don’t have a chip on their shoulder, a doormat attitude, or a need to control everything. They know their strengths and weaknesses. Remember, though, that most of us are a work in progress. Pray for an openness to let God work in their lives. And ask Him to bring people who will grow together in love (v. 10 - 11)
- 4.** Pray for volunteers who bring something special to the ministry team (v. 4). Consider the different functions and how they complement one another. Ask God to provide the people to fill the functions that will help the ministry to grow to its full potential. Ask Him to open spiritual eyes (your own and those of other volunteers) to people who see things from a different perspective -- but who see themselves as part of a whole.
- 5.** Pray for volunteers who understand spiritual giftedness and who are actively looking for the best place for God to use their gifts. Ask Him to enable you to encourage your volunteers to explore their gifts and to attribute their success to His grace.
- 6.** Pray for volunteers who work hard at their ministry and who work hard at maturing spiritually (v. 11). Be sure to include prayers for yourself and your team so that your volunteers never feel like they have to choose between giving and growing.

7. Pray for volunteers who pray! (v. 11) They know where their guidance and power and support come from, and they call on Him to do spiritual work through their mortal bodies.

8. Pray for volunteers who see the needs of other believers and help to meet them (v. 12). This may mean financial generosity, but it can also mean providing transportation for another volunteer, opening their homes to meetings, or bringing healthy snacks instead of sugary treats for volunteers who struggle with health issues. Ask God for people who welcome people into their homes, into their hearts, and into their church family.

9. Pray for volunteers who are emotionally engaged with others (v. 15). Volunteers don't need to wear their hearts on their sleeves -- and some volunteers need guidance in knowing how much info is too much. Ask the Lord to give you volunteers who care enough to care -- who can laugh and cry and create safe space and give support.

10. Pray for volunteers who are on the same page -- who bring their eclectic experiences and unique points of view, but who bond together in their single-minded purpose of seeking the mind of Christ (v. 16).

11. Pray for volunteers who can push past the economic and educational differences that stratify society (v. 16). They don't gloss over the differences that are real challenges for so many people. Instead, they find a way to enjoy serving with individuals whose backgrounds and opportunities are different from their own. Pray also that God will remind each of your volunteers that there is no place for feeling superior in the Body (see also 1 Cor 12:22-25; Isaiah 6).

12. Pray for volunteers who have the kind of moral compass that guides them without the need for detailed church rules, constant micromanagement, and civil laws to cover every possible temptation (v. 17). Ask Him for volunteers who, though they are mindful of God's judgment, are looking for ways to reach out with His love and peace (v. 18).

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Summing it up, yes, this looks like a wish list for the perfect volunteer -- and we know that we work with imperfect people in a fallen world. Keep in mind that these are suggestions for prayer, not minimum job requirements as you screen candidates.

Ask the Lord to open your spiritual eyes and spiritual ears to discern hearts that are open to Him and lives that are available to His work in your ministry.

Finally, thank Him for providing the volunteers you need.
Never forget to say, "Thank you, Lord!"