

## **The Ninety-second Invite**

You have about ninety seconds, that's it. If your personal invitation to someone cannot be summarized in about a minute and a half, you're not ready to shoulder-tap. People are busy. People are constantly solicited for their money and time, in and out of church. Your invitation to them had better strike a chord in less than a couple minutes, or you'll have lost their interest in listening.

I believe an effective personal invite must break down into three parts: personal affirmation, a distinct opportunity, and your personal passion for the opportunity. This can't be spin. It's not about being slick. If the shoulder-tapping invite is perceived as one more "sales job", we've missed the point.

### **The Ninety-second Invite: Personal Affirmation**

If you were merely recruiting to fill the necessary quotas for the volunteer roles, this first part wouldn't be a factor. However, we're not merely recruiting. Your focus must be on the individual who brings to your church a unique contribution designed by God. How will you help this individual become involved in an way that helps them build relationships, develop ownership and take steps in their journey with God?

So, begin with personal affirmation. Verbalize the explicit skills, giftedness, and personality traits you see in this person. Be specific. "I've noticed your gregarious interaction with people around you. I witnessed that you went out of your way to help the young mom sitting next to you last weekend get to the children's center to pick up her daughter. You seem to have a natural magnetic approach with people that is disarming and drawing at the same time." Do you think this prospective volunteer is checking out of the conversation? No, they are affirmed. You've noticed them, and you've noticed them for who they are.

### **The Ninety-second Invite: a Distinct Opportunity**

The second part of this invite is an invitation to explore a specific volunteer area with which you believe your friend's uniqueness is a match. But it's important to do so only after you've affirmed what you see in the person. To simply pitch the invitation to come to a guest services orientation is to miss the personal part of this conversation. So, you add, "Because of the way I see you relate with people around you, I think you'd be in your element volunteering in guest services here at the church. You're already greeting and assisting other guests around you. You'd be a natural fit on our guest services team!"

## **The Ninety-second Invite: Your Personal Passion**

Occasionally I've had a friend or family member hold a fork-full of food up to my face and say, "Try this!"

"Have you tried it?" I ask.

"No."

"Then why should I be your guinea pig?" I respond.

I enjoy new foods; it's an adventure for me. But even I feel set-up when the new dish doesn't come with a recommendation based on a pleasant experience.

Your volunteer invitation to a new guest will bear similar results if can't support your recommendation with an enthusiastic, personal endorsement. The final part of this ninety-second invite sounds like this: "I volunteer as a greeter in our guest services area and I love it! I've met some fantastic people on the team; it's introduced me to a level of community in our church that's made this place not seem so large. The more I give, the more I feel like I receive. I'm having the time of my life!"

In less than ninety seconds you've affirmed your friend, outlined the opportunity, and shared your personal passion. Sometimes that brief conversation may be enough to invite the person to meet a team leader, attend an orientation or shadow with you for a service. Ultimately, the exchange has peaked his or her attention enough to engage more conversation. Make it personal. Be affirming. Be specific. Be passionate.

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Mark Waltz