

# Growth Points

with Gary L. McIntosh, Ph.D.

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## Two for One

One of the most common frustrations of pastors and church leaders is finding people to fill ministry positions in the church. It's often like the proverbial *pulling of teeth* to identify volunteers who are not only willing but capable of serving. Bulletin notices, pulpit announcements, even personal invitations often come up dry. It is helpful to use the Two for One Rule when recruiting volunteers. While this rule of thumb seems counterintuitive, it

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actually works: Ask two people to fill each ministry position in your church when the job only calls for one.

Here are some of the reasons people shy away from volunteering for church responsibilities. They ...

1. feel unqualified for the task;
2. feel uncertain about the requirements;
3. don't want the responsibility;
4. feel isolated and alone with their task;
5. value their discretionary time;
6. don't identify with the mission.

One simple rule of thumb obviously won't solve every problem concerning volunteers. But this rule definitely deals with several of these obstacles. When you are looking for a person to fill a role (i.e., Sunday school teacher, choir member, usher, committee chairperson, small group leader, etc.) recruit *two people* to serve together who can share the responsibilities. For example, two people could be Sunday school teachers for

the same class. One would take the class for September, the other for October. Or, they could alternate each week. Or, they could team-teach each week.

How about ushers? A medium-sized church in California actually recruits thirty-six people as Sunday morning ushers, when most churches would recruit only six. Here's how it works. The sanctuary has three aisles which divide the pews into four sections (far left, left-center, right-center, far right). There are two ushers per aisle, or six per service. The church has two services. But, rather than ask six people to usher both services for all 52 weeks, they have six teams of six. Team #1 ushers the

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# How many ministry positions do you have?

Ask people to serve together rather than alone.

first service for the first month. Team #2 ushers in the second service for the first month. Then, Team #3 ushers the first service for the second month, and Team #4 ushers the second service for the second month. Team #5 is then responsible for the first service in the third month, and Team #6 handles the second service during the third month. After a full cycle, three months later, Team #1 is back on duty for the first service. This is a great way to 1) involve more people as ushers, 2) demand less time of each usher, and 3) have a pool of qualified people to substitute if a scheduled usher is out of town or gets sick the night before.

How about the chairperson of your Christian Education committee? Some folks are willing to serve on a committee, but being chairperson may be a little too daunting. It's much less intimidating to divide up the responsibilities. The co-chairs can share duties or specialize. One can stand in if the other is out of town. As each supports the other their creative power is doubled. With the prospect of sharing responsibilities, along with a one-year commitment, you'll find it much easier to identify willing and able volunteers in your church . . . especially for those outreach positions.

## What You Can Do About It

First, make a list of all the positions available in your church. In larger churches ask the leaders of each department or ministry to develop a list for their particular area of responsibility. Work with several other people and put a check beside each position that could possibly be handled by two (or even three) people. When you have finished, consider your significant accomplishment: you

have just dramatically increased the number of ministry opportunities available in your church!

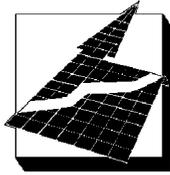
Before you entirely dive into this new policy change, identify several positions with which you can experiment. Sit down with the person who is now responsible for this task and brainstorm how the position would work with two people sharing the duties. Create or revise the ministry job description with the idea of two people sharing the responsibilities. However, don't assign specific tasks to one or the other person; let them work that out themselves. Then, the next time this position becomes vacant, try recruiting two people and see what happens. Even if the person who is now in that place wants to continue, have him/her look for one more person to share the tasks. Then monitor what happens, get feedback from the involved persons, and learn from experience. It could give you all kinds of new opportunities for new ministry.

So, where might the Two for One Rule be useful in your church? What ministries could you begin to use this with this month?



Adapted from *What Every Pastor Should Know* (Baker Books 2013) by Gary L. McIntosh and Charles Arn.

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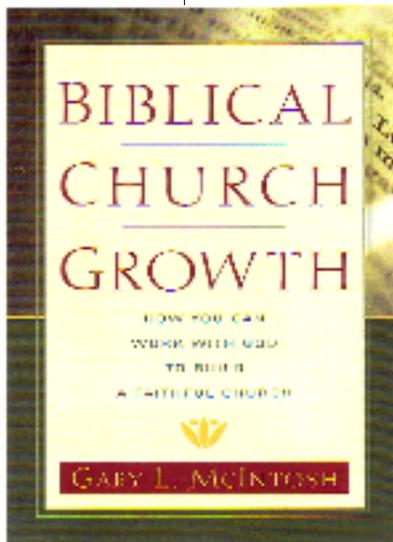
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