ROUNDTABLE RECAP

Community Roundtable: Empowering Volunteers

A practical conversation about developing leaders, clarifying roles, and building healthier volunteer systems.

November 3, 2026

Watch the recording

TRY THIS WEEK

Run the audit on one ministry team.

Walk through these questions with one leader, then draft a single role description from the template.

THE QUICK AUDIT

Would the ministry fall apart if this volunteer or leader left tomorrow?

If they lost their computer, would the ministry stop?

How can our church empower this volunteer?

How to read your answers for your context

Answered yes to the first two?

The ministry depends on one person. Write the role description and have someone shadow them.

People do tasks but rarely decide?

Look for one decision each volunteer can own, moving them from doing to owning.

Interest stalls somewhere on the path?

Ask whether it's the person, the training, or the system before adding another reminder.

ROUNDTABLE RECAP · KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Equip the body to do the work of ministry well.

Not just getting more people to do more. Leadership development sharpens the gifts God has already given people, without putting anyone on a pedestal.

Healthy development moves people **from doing to owning**, **from managing to leading**, and **from deciding to directing**. It also makes developing other leaders part of every leader's job.

2 Clear is kind. Spell out what you are asking.

A role rarely explains itself. Write a role description for every position, from elders to café volunteers. Clear expectations help everyone and keep onboarding consistent, even when each ministry runs it a little differently.

Character · Culture · Chemistry · Competency · Commitment

3 The process organizes, but relationships move people through it.

Here is River Church's serving path, from first interest to first Sunday.

STEP 1
Church Center serving page
A spiritual gifts assessment, open roles with descriptions, and an interest form.

STEP 2
Interest goes to a ministry deacon
The deacon follows up personally.

STEP 3
Shadow someone
The new volunteer learns the role alongside a current one.

STEP 4
Sign the role description
Expectations are agreed to in writing.

STEP 5
Get scheduled in Services
They are on the team.

A form can tell us what someone is interested in. It can't replace a conversation.

4

Build systems for people, not the other way around.

When someone struggles with a system, work out whether the problem is the person, the training, or the system itself.

River Church uses Church Center as a familiar hub instead of requiring everyone to learn the Services app. When someone doesn't respond, they often reach out by text, phone call, or in person rather than sending another automated reminder.

Systems should help you do ministry, not just make it easier to manage.

Grab the templates and form

Start with the role description template, then build out your serving opportunities.

- Team Member Role Description Template
- Serving Opportunities Template
- Mock Serving Form Application

Thank you for joining us and for all you do for your volunteers.

Community Team @ Planning Center