

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP SERIES

Before You Say Yes

A Guide for Prospective Volunteers and Lay Leaders

Whether you are considering a weekend ministry role, or a lay leadership position such as deacon, elder, or trustee, the commitment is real. Before you say yes, understand what you are stepping into.

What You Are Committing To

<p>Time</p> <p>Beyond meetings; preparation, follow-through, and availability between sessions. Estimate honestly before committing.</p>	<p>Responsibility</p> <p>You may carry fiduciary, relational, or organizational accountability. Understand what decisions you will own.</p>
<p>Relationships</p> <p>You will navigate disagreements and personalities. Be mindful of any authority conflicts with those you are personally close to.</p>	<p>Longevity</p> <p>Serve the full term you accept. Frequent turnover in leadership burdens those who remain and disrupts organizational health.</p>

Questions to Ask Before You Commit

<p>About the Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a written role description? • What is the real time commitment? • Who do I report to — and who is accountable to me? • Is this a defined term with an off-ramp? 	<p>About the Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May I review governing documents? • What is the current financial health? • Are there active conflicts I should know about? • Why has this role seen turnover recently? 	<p>About Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will I receive an orientation? • Are meetings scheduled consistently? • What resources are available for this role? • Who do I go to with concerns?
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Reading the Room

Healthy Signs	Proceed with Caution
Written role description exists	Role defined only verbally or informally
Governing documents shared readily	Documents unavailable or access deflected
Questions welcomed and answered fully	Pressure to decide without full information
Prior volunteers speak well of the experience	High turnover with vague explanations

A Note on Roles That Never Reset

Youth, children's, and other relational ministries do not follow a standard term cycle. Each year brings a new group of students who need consistent adult presence. If you are considering one of these roles, understand that the off-ramp looks different. Transitions require advance planning, overlap, and a successor ready before you step back. Your presence *is* the ministry. See the companion guide: **When the Role Never Really Ends.**

A healthy organization welcomes your questions. If a leader discourages you from asking, **that itself is important information.**