

What makes it worthwhile

By [Diane Roth](#)

December 7, 2012

Recently I went home early, coming down with a cold, feeling low, sore throat, all those things. I'd been calling people for a community meeting, and a lot of people were not able to come, for a variety of good reasons. But you know what? It's discouraging, especially when you have a cold and are feeling sorry for yourself already.

That's one of the things they don't teach you about in seminary: calling people on the phone to do stuff, especially when they have a variety of good reasons for saying no.

Of course, I (kind of) already knew about this, as I used to call to recruit Sunday School teachers. It was long ago, even before I went to seminary, and I learned a lot from that experience. Mainly, I learned what it was like to call a lot of people on the phone and hear them say "no". I also learned some things about how busy people are, all the things that people juggle in their lives. Sometimes they sounded like excuses, and sometimes they sounded like the weight of the world, griefs and worries I could not imagine. I would hear about it. It's one of the reasons I think, discouraging as it might be, that it's a good thing to call people on the phone and ask them to do things. Even when people say no, I learn.

Sometimes they say yes, anyway. Sometimes they (not only) say yes, but it turns out that I have asked them to do just the right thing. It could be washing the dishes or watching my dog, or leading a Bible study or praying in front of people. It could be singing a song or bringing brownies.

I want to see more of it. I love when the sixth grade girl sings a solo in church, or when the 75 year old woman decides that she wants to begin reading the lessons in church, or when the young man who hates public speaking gets up and tells us how the church is not "them", it is us. "They" aren't asking for money, he said. It's us. It's our community. That's what he said.

That's what makes it worthwhile: when someone prays who has never prayed before, when someone stands up and leads (who isn't me), when someone claims their identity as a child of God, and shines.

*Originally posted at [Faith in Community](#)*