



Weekly Tip - July 13, 2026

## Why the Phone Still Beats the Inbox

Dear Ministry Leader,

Quick question before you open your email this morning: when is the last time you called a partner just to see how they are doing, with nothing attached to an ask?

If you had to think about it for more than a second, you are not alone. Most development shops I work with have quietly retired the phone. Email is faster, a newsletter reaches everyone at once, and a text feels less intrusive. All true. None of it replaces a voice.

I learned this the hard way at YFC. One month we sent a beautifully written newsletter update to about two thousand partners. It looked great. We got maybe a dozen replies. That same month, I blocked two afternoons and just called partners, forty of them, no ask, just checking in. I heard real news, real prayer requests, a couple of hard seasons I would never have known about otherwise. Two of those partners moved from occasional gifts to monthly giving before I ever asked them to. Nobody moves from occasional to monthly because of a newsletter. They move because someone showed they were known.

Here are three calls worth putting on your calendar this week. None of them mention money.

The "thank you" call. Not for a gift, for something smaller, a prayer, a volunteer shift, a shared post. Thank them for the thing most staff never think to mention.

The "how are you" call. Ask about their life or their own ministry passion. Do not pivot to an update. Just listen.

The "you crossed my mind" call. No occasion at all. You thought of them, so you called. That is the whole reason.

None of these calls exist to move a partner closer to a gift. That is exactly the point. Paul was not chasing the gift from the Philippians either, he was chasing the fruit that would be added to their account (Philippians 4:17). A call with no ask attached is one of the clearest ways you can put that verse into practice. You are pursuing the partner's growth, not your goal.

I will be honest, this kind of call is harder to schedule than a mass email. There is no template, no send button, no way to knock out two thousand at once. It takes real time, one conversation at a time. Colossians 3:23 was written for exactly this kind of unglamorous, unwatched effort: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord." Nobody claps when you finish a call list. Do it anyway.

Why not try this this week? Pull a list of five partners you have not spoken with in the last ninety days. Block thirty minutes. Make five calls, no ask, no pitch. Just a voice, a real question, and your full attention.

You already have this tool. It has been sitting next to your keyboard the whole time.

Passionately,

Rick

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P.S. If you would like help building a simple partner-call rhythm into your week (who to call, how often, what to say when you are not asking for anything), that is exactly the kind of thing we can map out in a complimentary 30-minute conversation. Call or text (209) 541-5720.

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