



# THE MINISTRY OF THE

**ALTAR**



# WORKER And CHURCH ETIQUETTE Training Guide

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# **The Ministry of the Altar Worker**

## **TRAINING PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Altar Workers' Ministry Training is to introduce the Elders, Ministers, Missionaries and Deacons to the basics of ministering at the altar. We will also review some of the do's and don'ts as is connected to the culture of Ecclesia. We have felt the pains of disappointment as hungry souls responded to the invitation to receive God's provisions, only to find that sometimes no one was able to effectively assist them at the altar.

Another reason why we are having this training is to make sure we have consistency in how we do ministry and set standards of excellence in everything that we do. *Daniel 6:3 states, "then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him, and the king thought to set him over the whole realm."* There are different gifts and anointing but there must always be a level of consistency in the house in terms of how we operate and equip those who are serving in this capacity to do ministry in an effective way. Abiding in covenant with this training maintains the excellence required to do ministry in this season. The joy and rewards from this ministry is seeing people free, saved and walking in the power of our God!

## **OBJECTIVE**

To instruct, assist and/or lead the seeker to an experience with God and assist leadership in sustaining order in the house during times of altar calls.

## **THE MISSION**

To demonstrate a passion for souls by ministering to and ensuring that those who respond to the altar call receive salvation, restoration or special prayer by offering words of encouragement and maintain order during altar calls.

## **SCRIPTURE**

James 5:16 King James Version (KJV)

<sup>16</sup> Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

## THE ALTAR

The Altar as introduced to us in the Old Testament under the Mosaic Law provided that the priests and Levites alone could labor in altar duties. Altars were used primarily as places of sacrifices, especially animal sacrifice. Altar literally translates *place of self-sacrifice, total surrender to God, place of emptying-out; a place of death*. New Testament references to altars concern proper worship (Matt. 5:23-24) and hypocrisy in worship (Matt. 23:18-20). The message that Jesus Christ is the ultimate sacrifice who puts us right with God is the theme of the New Testament. In our church (Ecclesia), the altar is a place people can come and repent of their sins, pray to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost, pray for needs, pray for deliverance, and to get a "touch" from God.

## THE ALTAR CALL

While Altar Calls as practiced today are not found in the Bible, there are however, several biblical examples to support using them. First, Christ called each of His disciples publicly, telling them "follow Me" (Matthew 4:19, 9:9) and expecting them to respond immediately, which they did. Jesus was demanding an outward identification with Himself on the part of those who would be His disciples. Proponents of the altar call also cite Matthew 10:32 as proof that a new believer must acknowledge Christ "before men" in order for Him to reciprocate.

**So, the Altar Call or Call to Discipleship** is the practice of inviting people forward after an evangelistic sermon to make a public confession of faith in Christ. It is so named because the supplicant (a person who asks for something in a respectful way from God) gather at the altar located at the front of the church building. During this time the supplicant makes a prayer asking for his sins to be forgiven, acknowledges Jesus as the risen Son of God and pledges his/her devotion to Jesus and to live thereafter following Christ's teachings. This is called being born again. Romans 10:9 makes it clear that genuine salvation comes only from heartfelt belief, which will then result in a verbal confession of that faith. ***We believe the Altar Call is the Crowning Glory of the Church Service.***

The Altar Call is also an appeal to saints to come forward for specific purposes. For example, to rededicate their lives, to pray for healing, to surrender a new part of their lives to God, or to receive a blessing. It is also a place of dedication where callings are given (such as a call to the ministry). The Altar Call often involve the laying on of hands, and many people will come for prayer to receive their need. The Scripture teaches us that Jesus has given us power to lay hands on the sick and they shall recover throughout the Bible - Old and New; it teaches us about the laying on of hands by the priest (Mark 5:23; Mark 16:18; Acts 8:19; Acts 28:8). To lay hands is impartation of faith, power, healing and deliverance. The laying on of hands is a point of contact that (1) allows the person receiving ministry to feel the power and, (2) it allows the person praying to feel the need of that person (revealed by the Holy Ghost). Remember, the yoke is destroyed because of the anointing.

## **TYPES OF ALTAR CALLS**

The majority of altar calls usually concern:

Salvation:	A call for those who need to repent from their sins and be born-again.
Baptism of the Holy Spirit:	A call for those who want to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
Commitment:	General calls for those who want to recommit their lives, desire a deeper walk with the Lord Jesus Christ, etc.
Healing:	An appeal for those who need physical, mental, or emotional healing.
Deliverance:	An appeal for those needing deliverance from addictive substances, from depression, fear, anger, bitterness, other works of the flesh, demonic influences, etc.

## **LINE ALTAR CALLS**

Whenever there is a line call for prayer, the Altar Worker's responsibility is to make sure the line flows and that everyone receives prayer and proper coverage is provided. Keep the awaiting congregation praying with lifted hands as a long as you can. This is not a cheese line where you are waiting to get your portion. God can move in the line without hands being laid on. Keep the praise going and the anticipation thriving so that the ministry will be easy for the one ministering.

## **CORPORATE ALTAR CALLS**

During times of corporate altar calls, the altar workers should surround the altar to be available as needed. Be mindful of your surroundings and the proper protocol for the minister. There may be times when you may be asked to anoint before prayer at the altar. You just anoint them in the name of Jesus and move on to the next person. If you are told to move forward and minister, when possible, do so two-by-two; one praying the other covering. Please allow God to use the one He desires. What I mean is that if the anointing is flowing on your partner to pray then continue to cover and let them pray. Be a team player; this is not the time for you to show off how anointed you are or to score some points with the leader. ***The altar is about souls, pleasing God, and allowing the anointing to work.***

## **THE MINISTRY OF THE ALTAR WORKER**

Altar Workers must have a full understanding of the roles and responsibilities for this ministry. They have the privilege of interceding and engaging in a spiritual battle for the

souls of God's people. When a person comes to the altar in faith they will walk away changed by the Power of the Holy Ghost.

- The Altar Worker must live a life acceptable to the Lord.
- The Altar Worker must be saved and filled with the Holy Ghost.
- The Altar Worker must be confident in operating in the authority of God and really feel the call to the ministry of prayer.
- The Altar Worker must have a life of prayer and intercession.
- The Altar Worker must be a faithful and committed tithe paying member.
- The Altar Worker must be one who is sensitive to the leading of the Holy Ghost.
- The Altar Worker must be one who has the spirit of submission and follows leadership.
- The Altar Worker must be one who understands and knows the principles of salvation.
- The Altar Worker must have a keen eye and relationship with the Lord as well as with the Pastor.
- The Altar Worker must know the Pastor's heart and style of ministry. You must be attentive and know the gestures and sign languages he sometimes uses.
- The Altar Worker must be confident in his/her gifting to intercede for individuals and lead individuals to Christ and His Kingdom. They basically operate as the extended arm to individuals that respond to God's work at the altar to ensure that we can navigate their entrance into the kingdom.

### **ALTAR MINISTRY PREPARATION**

To ensure that proper etiquette and hygiene are preserved during the altar call experience, all altar workers will practice the following:

1. Refresh hands discreetly with hand sanitizer to ensure we have clean hands.
2. Be careful about personal hygiene (teeth, breath and body odor). Carry a supply of breath mints or breath strips and use them as you see the minister concluding his message.
3. Be mindful of strong perfumes and colognes.

### **THE ALTAR WORKER'S ROLE**

Since the work of the altar worker greatly determines the destiny of the candidate, he, for Christ's sake, the Church's sake, the petitioner's sake, and his own sake cannot take this ministry lightly. It cannot be a hit or miss situation. It is judgment work. The Scriptures declares, "He that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). You have the opportunity to "reap" spiritual fruit for the Kingdom of God. As a minister shares God's Word, he or she is "sowing" it in the hearts of those who listen. After the sermon when he or she provides opportunity for listeners to respond to their challenge, a great spiritual "harvest" is ready to be reaped. As an altar worker, you serve those who respond to the altar call made by the

minister. You are working with the minister to "reap" the spiritual fruit of men, women, boys, and girls who have received and acted upon the Word of God.

The altar worker's approach should always be positive. The gospel is a positive message. It brings people from darkness to light, from sin to salvation, from death to life. Therefore, you cannot afford to be anything but positive. You must be convinced that what you have to say will, through Christ, change the person's life as he follows your instructions. You cannot have any doubts or reservations as to whether the salvation you are advocating through Christ is what the person needs. You also must believe and doubt not that he is going to receive his need while you pray with him. The Word declares it, you believe it, and the work is done! Jesus said, "Therefore I say unto you, what things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

When a person responds to the invitation of the preacher to come forward and accept Christ or receive a deeper experience from the Lord, he is normally very sincere. He is doing what the preacher has suggested. Therefore, it is only reasonable that there should be someone to meet him at the altar and explain further how to receive these blessings from the Lord. The altar worker has this privilege. He is the specialist in this area of ministry. The more he studies, prays and applies himself to this ministry, the more proficient he becomes.

The altar worker must learn a system or plan in which he proceeds from point "A" to point "B" to point "C", etc. It is much like the builder who builds the house. He simply follows the blueprint and the work is accomplished. Likewise, the altar worker simply follows the plan.

- When the altar call is made, be ready to move forward immediately. The Elders, Ministers and Missionaries will move to the front of the altar and face the congregation with extended hands receiving persons who are coming to the altar and awaits instructions from the minister.
- If the presiding minister decides to pray for those on the altar then all other altar workers will agree with the general prayer.
- If the minister directs the altar workers to pray for the individuals at the altar then ask the Holy Ghost to lead you to the person to whom you should minister in your immediate area.
- Assisting other visiting ministers at the altar requires interaction with people during prayer, salvation, deliverance and healing. The altar worker is required to do a lot of bending and moving around. For this cause, clothing should be loose fitting allowing you room to move around. Always keep up with the one ministering as they may move all around the sanctuary. Keep up with the flow.
- If the altar is full then as many elders, ministers and missionaries should avail themselves to assist if it is only to agree with the altar worker that will pray with the seeker.

- Make sure the seeker is not confused by the altar workers. If an altar worker has prayed for the seeker than there is no need for another to pray an additional prayer. God is not the author of confusion.
- There may be times when you see a need but because of the setting you will not be able to minister freely. This is when intercession covers that individual and God will bless through prayer and we trust that at the appropriate time God will allow that person to be in a setting where they can be properly ministered to.

## **HOW DO I CATCH A PERSON?**

I know it has been said “Well, if they are in the spirit they won’t get hurt” but in the times in which we live churches have been sued because of this. Be watchful to prevent those who may become overwhelmed in the spirit and fall on someone causing a domino effect.

First and foremost, you should always handle someone gently. Remember to protect your back by bending your knees as you lower them to the floor. If you are ministering alone and someone heavier than you are receiving ministry, brace your body against that person and place one leg behind and prop them. This will keep you from falling. The appropriate way to catch a full-figured person is to have two (2) altar workers stand directly behind them as close as they can with their hands clamp around the wrist. Try not to hold hands; this is not secure as sometimes the hands will easily come loose with the pressure of weight. By holding onto the wrist, you have more strength. Attempts to keep them standing is sometimes possible by pressing our body against them but if not possible gently lower them to the floor bending your knees to protect your back. Always make sure you refrain from touching people inappropriately.

- Appropriate position for catching will be demonstrated for you.
- Because of the times we are living in women and men wear a lot of weaves, wigs and extensions. Be mindful not to pull or tug on them. To prevent embarrassment ensure they are intact before they return to their seats (fix clothing, hair, wipe face, give back glasses, jewelry, etc.). Always be mindful to assist the person getting up from the floor.

## **THE DO’S & DON’TS OF ALTAR WORK**

- Be aware of what you are praying (ask the individual if you do not know), otherwise prayers may be prayed in vain and time wasted. Be unctioned by the Holy Ghost.
- Be careful not to be offensive in any manner and avoid unnecessary screaming in the seeker’s ear or slapping them on the back or massaging them as this may have a disconcerting effect. Don’t yell in their ears. Altar services can get very loud. Get close to the seeker’s ear and ask in a low voice “Can you hear me?” If they are having trouble hearing you, you can turn up the volume a little at a time until they do hear your instructions clearly.
- Do not call out personal problems loudly.
- Believe that God will bring deliverance....do not doubt or waiver.
- Don’t get so happy that you forget that you are ministering to someone and not being ministered to. Stay focused. You are not there to get a blessing yourself (and

in doing so forget about helping the seeker). Rebuke the devil in your mind, stay with one accord with the seeker.

- If a person is crying or responding emotionally to an appeal, do not interrupt this process unless it becomes "out of order" (extremely loud, disruptive, attention getting). Just draw alongside and begin to pray for them quietly. We are emotional beings, and God often deals with us first at the emotional level. When the emotion subsides, then you can talk with the seeker.
- It is important to follow up with ministry even when strong emotions have been evident. For example-- crying because one is sorry for sin is not enough. The seeker must understand the plan of salvation and make the proper response of repentance after the "godly sorrow" has subsided.
- Don't work the altar with bad breath or body odor.
- Don't spit in their face when you are praying with the seeker.
- Don't mess up their hair or clothing. Though many try, we cannot shake the Holy Ghost into a person.
- Don't put words in their mouth to get them to speak in tongues. Never tell a seeker to repeat after you, or to say something (i.e. "la-la-la", etc....).
- Don't get in their face (people today are very conscious of infectious diseases).
- Get consent from the seeker before you lay hands on them.
- Be sensitive, inoffensive, empathic (feel what they feel)
- Be perceptive. Observe what they are saying and what they are doing. Look for both positive and negative signs.
- Men should pray for men, and women pray for women. Exceptions would be in cases where the person responding is a relative (i.e., you are a woman and your brother responds to the salvation call) or when a husband and wife minister together to an individual of either sex.
- Men can lay hands on the head, shoulder, back or arms of another man. Men should lay hands ONLY on the head of a woman seeker.
- Women can lay hands on the head, shoulder, back or arms of another woman. Women should lay hands ONLY on the head of a man seeker.
- You should never lay hands on the Leader of the House without his/her permission.
- Serious problems should be referred to the pastoral staff. For example--if you minister to someone who is suicidal, a young lady planning an abortion, or someone whose home is about to break up--such situations are examples of serious problems that should be referred to the pastor. If you encounter a problem in ministering at the altar and you do not know what to do, **ask** for assistance from a member of the pastoral staff in your immediate area.

## **DISTRACTIONS**

Distractions are things that bring attention to someone or something other than the Word of God. It's important that we are never a part of distractions. Here's a brief list of some things that can bring distraction:

- Talking or whispering to other workers
- Chewing Gum
- Pulling and/or tugging on the individual
- Laughing and joking at the altar
- Fanning the person while they are still in the Spirit
- Laying hands too heavily on the person
- Pouring too much oil (running into eyes, face, clothing)
- Pulling from the floor before they are ready
- Please handle carefully the loved ones of the one getting prayer. Sometimes the children or others don't understand what's happening and become fearful. They try to pull and tug on them to make sure they are okay. If possible, remove them beforehand.
- Noise, it is so important to have a praying church while the altar call is going on.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR MINISTERING

## **HERE ARE GUIDELINES FOR MINISTERING TO THOSE IN NEED OF SALVATION. HOW TO LEAD TO CHRIST:**

The Bible teaches that salvation (being born again) is necessary for a person to see the Kingdom of God, to receive eternal life, forgiveness of sins, to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and to become a child of God and joint-heirs with Christ. Salvation is received by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the atonement of sin and includes a turning from sin (repentance). Salvation is by God's grace through faith. Once the Altar Worker has learned that the supplicant you are dealing with needs salvation, you are ready to begin leading him into a new life in Christ. You need not be timid or backward about directing him toward a decision. The path you are taking him means the difference in his eternal destiny. You are leading him from the fires of hell to the glories of heaven. If the person indicates his need of conversion, the altar worker will need to determine the knowledge of the candidate concerning salvation. If he has little knowledge of being born again, he will of necessity be approached differently than if he is a backslider. The altar worker may ascertain that he is interested in returning to Christ or he would not have come forward. Therefore, the altar worker should influence him to make a commitment by saying, "You desire to again enjoy fellowship with Christ, don't you?" His answer will normally be positive. Assure him that Jesus desires to take him back into His fellowship. Explain that he must return the same way in which he first came to Christ to further solidify the fact that Christ will accept him, have him read in your Bible 1 John 2: 1, 2. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (You should have this marked in your Bible and know it from memory.) Explain to the person what the word "advocate" means. (An advocate may be defined as a person who pleads for another's cause.) Also, explain to him that propitiation means that the blood-sprinkled body of Christ on the cross became the sacrifice for sinners once and for all.

### **SHARE THE NEED FOR SALVATION:**

Using the Scriptures, explain that they need salvation because all have sinned.

### **SHARE GOD'S SOLUTION:**

Using the Scriptures, share God's solution for sin, salvation by grace through faith.

**BRING TO A POINT OF DECISION:**

Bring the seeker to a point of decision, a positive affirmation that he wants to be saved.

**PRAY WITH THE PERSON:**

Pray out loud together. Have the person confess His sins and receive Jesus Christ as Savior.

If help to pray is needed, ask him to follow you in a prayer such as:

*Jesus, I acknowledge that I have sinned. Please forgive me of my sin as I now repent. I take you at your Word that you forgive those who ask. I accept you as my Savior. Thank you for cleansing me from sin. In Jesus name, Amen.*

Before leaving the altar, you should confirm the acceptance of the individual who give their life to Christ or decision to connect and fellowship with Ecclesia.

**SCRIPTURES FOR MEMORY:**

1) Acknowledge the Lost Condition:

Romans 3:23

Isaiah 53:6

2) Believe the Gospel

Acts 16:30

John 3:36

3) Repentance of Sins

Luke 13:3

Isaiah 55:7

4) Receive Christ as Personal Savior

John 1:12

John 3:16

Revelation 3:20

5) Confess Him as Lord

Romans 10:9,10

Mark 8:37

## **Ministering to Those Who Respond to Receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the overflowing of the Holy Spirit into, upon, and out of a born-again believer. It is the fulfillment of the promise of the Father to all believers. It leads to a full, purposeful, and victorious life in Jesus Christ. Speaking in an unlearned language is for one's own spiritual edification (1 Corinthians 14:2, 4); to extol the works of God (Acts 2:11); and to present a message from God (1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:6). It is a sign of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Power for service is the confirming evidence. Salvation is the qualification to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

### **MINISTERING TO THOSE NEEDING THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Here are guidelines for receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Encourage the seeker to:

#### **REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED:**

*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38)*

#### **BELIEVE THE EXPERIENCE IS FOR THEM:**

*For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (Acts 2:39)*

**ACCEPT IT AS A GIFT:**  
The Holy Spirit has already been given. It was given to the Church on the Day of Pentecost. Because it is a gift, you can do nothing to earn it: *the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38)* *This only would I learn of you. Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? He therefore that ministereth to you in the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles; through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:2, 5, 14)*

#### **PRAISE AND WORSHIP GOD:**

Join the seeker in praise and worship of the Lord and wait for the evidence to come forth. Expect it to do so! The evidence may come at first with "stammering lips." A fluency in language comes with usage. The seeker should offer any sound not understood by himself as praise to God. *For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. (Isaiah 28:11)*

If, after a period of time, the evidence of a Spirit given language is not forthcoming, encourage the seeker to continue seeking the Lord through praise and worship. Assure him that the experience will come as he continues to praise God in his prayer time and learns to yield to the Spirit.

### **Ministering to Those Who Respond for Commitment**

Altar calls for commitment are general calls made for those who want to recommit their lives to Jesus or desire a deeper walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. Such calls may also focus on dedicating to full-time Christian service, responding to mission appeals, rededicating to your marriage and family, etc.

#### **MINISTERING TO A PERSON RESPONDING FOR COMMITMENT**

Here are guidelines for ministering to a person responding for commitment:

##### **DETERMINE THE REASON FOR THEIR RESPONSE:**

Ask the seeker, "What may I pray with you about?" This will determine the reason he has responded to the call.

##### **PRAY SPECIFICALLY ABOUT THE NEED:**

Pray specifically for his desire, i.e., a deeper walk with the Lord, guidance for full-time Christian service, recommitting his life to the Lord and His service, etc. understood by himself as praise to God.

### **Ministering to Those Who Respond for Healing**

In an altar call for healing, a minister usually requests those in need of physical, mental, or emotional healing to respond in some manner. The Bible promises physical healing, but we should never focus on physical healing apart from the more important matter of spiritual healing. The Bible does teach divine healing is available through the atonement and that God heals physically, mentally, and emotionally as well as spiritually.

#### **MINISTERING TO THOSE IN NEED OF HEALING**

Here are guidelines for ministering to those in need of healing:

##### **LISTEN FOR INSTRUCTIONS:**

Calls for divine healing take various forms:

The minister may ask people to lift their hands if they need healing and ask the altar workers to go to them where they are and pray. He may ask those needing healing to step into the aisles and ask you to minister to them there. The minister may ask those in need of healing to come forward and line up or kneel at the altar and then ask you to come and pray for them. The minister may ask people to come to the altar and have you just stand with them as he prays individually for them. Listen carefully to the instructions so you will be able to flow with the Holy Spirit.

##### **BRING THE SEEKER TO A POINT OF DECISION:**

Sometimes you will only be asked to pray or join the minister in a prayer for healing. Other times you will have opportunity to pray with the seeker. If you pray, bring the seeker to a point of decision regarding their healing, just as you do regarding salvation. Remember how Jesus asked the lame man, "*Wilt thou be made whole?*" (John 5:6).

**BE SURE THE PERSON IS BORN AGAIN:**

Make sure the person is born-again. This is "spiritual healing" and is the most important type of healing.

**DETERMINE THE SPECIFIC CONDITION:** Jesus asked people what they wanted, inquired concerning their faith, and dealt with negative forces of unbelief before ministering to them. Ask the person, "What is the problem?" Jesus asked a similar question to many who came to him for healing. Verbalizing the request for prayer is important for the sick. Ask for a specific statement. If a request is too general, you will not know what to pray for and the affected person may not recognize healing when it comes. You need only brief facts: "I have cancer of the stomach." You do not need a complete medical history. Do not try to analyze the information you are given. Your function is to pray, not provide advice. Some unique cases may require privacy and more time for counseling. Refer these individuals to the pastoral staff. Ask the person who is to be prayed for, "Do you believe Jesus can heal?" If they answer positively, then ask, "Do you believe Jesus will do it now?" If the answer is "no" to either of these questions, further instruction from God's Word is needed.

**PRAY THE HEALING PRAYER:**

When you pray the healing prayer, pray specifically for the condition. Remember that you *do not have to persuade God to heal by the length or loudness of your prayer*. Just as salvation is already available, the same is true of healing. Just as salvation is based on the condition of faith, so is healing. God wants to heal, just as He wants to save. Although the power of God is sometimes present in a special way for healing (Luke 5:17), you can still pray for healing without a special anointing because Jesus commanded you to do it just as He told you to spread the Gospel.

**PRAISE GOD FOR THE ANSWER:**

Follow prayer with praise to God for healing. Remember that in the case of the ten lepers all were healed but only the one who returned to praise was made whole. **Praise God by faith and not by sight.** You have done what God's Word said to do. Believe He has done what He said He would do. Thank Him for it. Jesus thanked God for hearing His prayer before Lazarus ever came out from the tomb.

## **Ministering to Those Who Respond for Deliverance**

The need for deliverance is manifested by an inability to be free from mental, emotional, physical, or spiritual bondage associated with demonic activity or works of the flesh. Our warfare is with the forces of evil (Ephesians 6:12). Our weapon is the Word of God. The battle involves prayer (Ephesians 6:14-18) with the authority and power given by Jesus (Mark 16:17; Acts 1:8). Cases of actual demon possession are relatively few compared to those oppressed by the enemy with habits, depression, discouragement, etc. and those in bondage to the works of the flesh.

### **MINISTERING TO THOSE IN NEED OF DELIVERANCE**

Here are some guidelines for ministering to those in need of deliverance:

**INQUIRE REGARDING SALVATION:**

If you do not know if the person is a Christian, inquire regarding their salvation. Salvation is necessary for true deliverance.

**DETERMINE THE SPECIFIC PROBLEM:**

Ask the person, "What is the problem?" Their request is in itself an act of faith that can set in motion the deliverance processes (James 5:14-15). Ask for a specific statement of brief facts. Do not try to psychoanalyze the information you are given. Your function is to minister deliverance. Some unique cases may require privacy and more time for counseling. These should be referred to the pastoral staff. Ask the person who is to be prayed for, "Do you believe Jesus can deliver you?" If they answer positively, then ask, "Do you believe Jesus will do it now?" If the answer is "no" to either of these questions, further instruction from God's Word is needed. Use the information from the interview and/or the wisdom God has given to you to determine if the problem is in the:

- Spiritual Realm: Problems related to sin.
- Physical Realm: Bodily sickness caused by demonic spirits of infirmity.
- Emotional Realm: Problems concerning anxiety, fear, anger, bitterness, resentment, guilt, doubt, failure, jealousy, selfishness, confusion, frustration, perfectionism in the energy of the flesh, unforgiveness, and past situations.
- Mental Realm: Problems stemming from negative thinking, attacks of Satan on the mind, mental retardation.

Remember: Because man is a triune being, problems in one realm affect the whole person. As you minister, deal with the whole person, not just one area. Man is body, soul, and spirit: Wholeness implies dealing with these.

**PRAY THE PRAYER OF DELIVERANCE:**

Pray a prayer of deliverance which focuses on the specific problem of demonic influence which you have identified. You do not have to persuade God to deliver by your prayer. Just as salvation is already available, the same is true of deliverance. Just as salvation is based on the condition of faith, so is deliverance. God wants to deliver, just as He wants to save. Although the power of God is sometimes present in a special way for deliverance (Luke 5:17), you can still pray without a special anointing because Jesus commanded you to do so just as He told you to spread the Gospel. Jesus taught that first you should bind the enemy, then you can exercise power over him: *Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man and then he will spoil his house.* (Matthew 12:29)

If demonic powers are binding in *oppression* from the outside, pray for their hold to be loosed and their powers to be bound. For example, Jesus loosed the woman in the synagogue from the spirit of infirmity. She was not possessed, but oppressed. A casting out was not necessary. In cases of demon *possession*, you have the authority to cast demons out in the name of Jesus. ***It is not authority in your own power or ability, but in His name. It is important to use the name of Jesus in the actual prayer of casting out the demon.*** When demon possession is evident, you should seek the assistance of the pastoral staff. Yelling and screaming is not necessary. It is your authority in the name of Jesus that brings

deliverance, not the volume of your voice during the prayer of deliverance. Do not spend time talking with a demon, should it manifest itself through spoken words.

Jesus rebuked demons and told them to be quiet (Luke 4:34-35). Remember that any conversation with demons is dangerous because there are lying spirits. Always forbid the demons to reenter. This is an important part of the prayer of deliverance: *When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him. (Mark 9:25)*

-Do not permit the demons to make a show. When Jesus saw the actions of a demon attracting a crowd, He immediately stopped the performance being staged by the evil spirit and cast it out (Mark 9:25).

-Do not attempt to cast demons into Hell. Jesus and His disciples did not do this. We have authority only to bind, loose, and cast out (Matthew 8:29).

### **PRAISE GOD FOR THE ANSWER:**

Follow prayer with praise to God for deliverance. Praise by faith and not by sight. You have done what God's Word said to do. Believe He has done what He said He would do.

Thank Him for it. In cases of demonic possession, sometimes the demons come out with a struggle, such as crying out or throwing the person on the floor. When demons have departed (whether in possession or oppression), **there will be a sense of release, joy, like the lifting of a weight.**

### **PROVIDE FOLLOW-UP INSTRUCTIONS:**

After deliverance from demonic forces, the seeker should be led in a prayer of confession, repentance, and renouncing of any sins or involvements connected with the demonic activities. If the person has any occult items (for example idols, voodoo items, witchcraft equipment, etc.), these should be destroyed. When a demon is cast out, he will seek another body through which to operate. Jesus taught that the departure of evil spirits leaves an empty place. There is danger of a demon returning to his former victim accompanied by worse spirits (Luke 11:24-26). When a demon is cast out it is restless and discontent outside of a human body. It is only by indwelling and controlling a human life that a demon is able to fulfill Satan's evil purposes. This is why the spiritual "house" must be filled by the new birth experience and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Follow-up counseling and ministry is necessary. The person should be immersed in the Word of God and prayer and become part of a community of believers.

### **CONCLUSION**

This is but an introduction to the vital work of altar ministry. The method presented here is only one of many and in no way, is to be taken as the only way. Neither is this material meant to give the idea that if a person has not studied it they are not to minister at the altar. Thousands of very effective altar workers have been instrumental in helping many, many people to receive the desired spiritual help long before this material was written. We are individuals and God so deals with us. Therefore, let us labor together with God for His glory and the edification of the Body of Christ.

*Miss'y Angie Wallace*  
*Presenter*

*SOURCES: Harvestime International Network; COGIC, Germany Jurisdiction Missionary Auxiliary Leadership Training Manual; Altar Guide PPP, Timbrell Church International*

# A GUIDE TO CHURCH ETIQUETTE



# ORDER

IN THE **CHURCH**

**Obedience + Rules + Direction + Excellence = Results**

“Let all things be done decently and in order.”

*1 Corinthians 14:40.*

“Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. “

*Ecclesiastes 5:1*

Most of us grew up in a home where it was expected to have the proper home training before we went to visit others. Our parents wanted to make sure we did not bring shame to them when they allowed us to visit friends and relatives. We were taught to be respectful and say “Yes/No, ma’am/sir, please, thank you, excuse me and may I. They also taught us that if you encountered a situation they did not teach you to use common sense. So, when we visited, people would say that’s so and so child and they are so well manner and respectful. This type of home training should be applied to the church from the same angle and a lot of common sense. Many people believe by growing up in church we will have all the church basic training needed. Well, not true.

Admittedly, one of the prevailing sins in our churches today is irreverence. What is seen and heard often in the house of prayer is an insult to God and must cause the angels to hide their faces. We stand indicted, and as workers and leaders we ourselves have been guilty of contributing to this laxity by our personal example. Realizing our solemn obligation, could we not improve our church manners and by example help to develop an atmosphere that will dignify our church services so that they will inspire respect and reverence in all who come to worship God in His sacred presence?

There are certain items of protocol and etiquette that every minister ought to know. There are some pastors and seasoned associates who will take the time to explain church etiquette, but then there are those who may think you already know what to do. So, today let’s examine and/or review a few basic rules of proper etiquette, church protocol, and saintly decorum.

### **Definitions:**

***Etiquette*** is the customary code of polite behavior in society or among members of a particular profession or group.

***Church Protocol*** is a code of courtesies and proper practices regarding church worship services. “Let all things be done decently and in order.” 1 Corinthians 14:40.

***Saintly Decorum:*** Correct or proper behavior of the “saints” that shows respect and good manners. In other words, it’s doing what is correct at the proper time and having the proper conduct along with the ability to perform.

## **Etiquette and Sainly Decorum.**

- Study your leader. Get to know the spirit of the leader.
- The leader is to be referred to by his/her highest title and last name. They are never to be called by first names. They may call you by your first name but you must always respond with yes “sir” or “ma’am” or bishop or mother.
- When your leader enters the room, you should always stand until he or she says or motions for you to be seated.
- Never esteem other individuals more than your leader. Know them that labor among you and are over you.....esteem them highly for their work’s sake...1 Thessalonians 5:13.
- When the leader has addressed a particular subject, no other voice should be heard unless you are designated by the leader. If you are at the podium during a service or meeting and the pastor or leader enters the room remember to acknowledge their presence, then move on.
- The Closing Remarks are usually reserved for the pastor.
- When you enter a worship service, it is a COGIC tradition to bow your head in a brief prayer after you are seated or kneel at your seat. Prayer acknowledges the Lord and expresses your desire for His presence and blessings.
- The purpose of the *Call to Worship* is to invoke the presence of God. A song of praise and/or a brief quote of praise and adoration (usually from the book of Psalms) are appropriate. Present remarks that harness the hearts and minds of the audience into an attitude of worship. The *Yes Lord Hymnal* is an excellent resource.
- The Opening Prayer for a program or worship service, also called the *Invocation*, is a form of prayer invoking the presence of God.
- Read scriptures that are uplifting and appropriate to the theme if any. Old Testament scriptures from Psalm are recommended and should not be more than 5 verses.
- Rehearse what will be read before you stand before the congregation. If you do not know how to pronounce then ask someone beforehand or google “how to pronounce”.
- Remarks can include brief exhortations, observations and comments. If not stated in the introduction, identify yourself and where you are from. Brevity leaves a good impression.
- Testimonies during any worship service should be brief (don’t try to cover your entire life). Be positive. Reflect on the victory you have. Negative testimonies magnify the works of Satan and create a bleak picture of the believer’s life. If you share your struggle always close out with an affirmation of your faith in the delivering power of God. Individuals in the congregation should always be left with a hope.
- Always be obedient to leadership even if you don’t agree or understand.
- Always do what you have been asked to do. If asked to read scripture, do not try to adlib or provide a mini-sermon.
- When you are asked to lead an opening or closing prayer, include prayer for the leader. (Example, local church auxiliaries call the pastor’s name, the president of that auxiliary, etc.).

- Always inform your pastor or the designated individual within the leadership structure of your local church when you are ministering at another church.
- Addressing the house denotes respect for the leadership. It includes acknowledging ranking officials beginning with the highest ranking. Use discretion rather than consuming a lot of time for acknowledgements. If the house has been address more than once you can state that “the house has been addressed or protocol has been established.” It is not necessary to address the house when making announcements, receiving an offering, prayer, scripture reading, sermonic solos, etc.
- When you mount the podium to deliver a message avoid taking large bibles, books and other items that occupy a lot of space. Organize your notes in a folder or notebook rather than loose pieces of paper. What would happen if a sudden wind scattered your papers?
- Build an arsenal of scriptures in your spirit! If you have “butterflies” and are nervous when you are first presented take a deep breath and quote a scripture or sing a song (if you can sing). These will ignite your spirit and generate Holy Ghost boldness.
- When ministering, as much as possible observe the time limit you are given. Remember, the anointing is subject to the vessel.
- Program participants should be notified in advance. It is in poor taste and unfair to place a name on a program assuming they will be present. Do your homework. Also keep in mind alternates for every aspect of the program in case of unforeseen circumstances.
- Attractive printed programs contribute to the success of the day. Put forth every effort to assure that the format and spelling of names are correct.
- *The pastor’s name/leader’s name* should appear on *all* printed material.
- If you are asked to speak at the last moment and you are not prepared, do not consume a lot of time with excuses. Share a praise report and/or testimony. Always have a scripture in your heart. Exhort the people of the Lord with His word.
- If your name appears on a program and you have not been notified, say so (be sweet) ...then proceed with your remarks.
- If you are the presider it is in poor taste to come behind the speaker and re-teach or “sam” (sneak-a-message). No matter how much you have been inspired, resist the temptation.
- **If you are the presider**, your top priority is to be prayerful. This will cause you to be sensitive to the flow of spirit. You will need to be in tune spiritually enough to know when to move on. Remember, your focus is the execution of the entire service/session. Be yourself! Project your own personality. Unfortunately, we cannot please everyone. God only requires that we please HIM. The presider should never leave the pulpit. You are the one who in charge of the service. Introduce (as much as possible) more than one participant at a time....once again, the flow is top priority. Watch the temptation to talk too much.
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- Excessive talking and chewing gum are of poor taste while in the house of God.

- It is disruptive and disrespectful to leave a service before the benediction unless absolutely necessary.

### **The Pulpit and the Platform.**

The pulpit is the most sacred and exalted place in the church. He who occupies this position stands as the representative of Christ. This is the minister's first line of offense. From this honored and dedicated place, he boldly denounces sin and courageously challenges the devil. From the sacred desk are heard the truths of God, which cut as a two-edged sword, bringing both conviction and contrition to the worshipper. Words of life and death flow from this fount. To this vantage point the repentant looks for the heavenly balm of Gilead. Is it not important then that one's comportment in the desk give no cause for needless offense and bring no reproach against the name of Christ?

The decorum on the platform and in the pulpit, can do much to set the tone and establish the mood for the church service. It is important that the ministers as well as others who participate in such services observe the ethical conduct that should prevail under such circumstances. Let us consider some of the essential points of this subject and ascertain whether we are doing all that is expected of us to inspire a reverential atmosphere and to establish a setting that will contribute to the efficacy of the service of worship.

- If you are late and worship has started, sit in the congregation not the pulpit.
- Be attentive to the flow of the service.
- Do not disrupt the flow of the service by offering unauthorized commentary or adding elements without pastoral permission.
- Be a catalyst for worship. Participation in the elements of worship can do a lot to set the tone in the congregation.
- Learn how to leave your worries, problems and negative emotions out of the pulpit. Remember the congregation watches your demeanor and your attitude.
- Prayerfully support the preacher. Preaching is hard work. The preacher is representing God and is in constant spiritual battle. Use prayer to uplift the preacher while preaching. Whether your pastor or another associate is preaching, they should have a guaranteed "amen" from you.
- Platform seating for local, district, and state meetings should be in order starting with highest ranking official first.
- Those who are to go on the platform should meet in a designated place, in sufficient time to become acquainted with the order of service, the arrangement of seating, and the part each one is to have on the program. Such a practice will avoid confusion, embarrassment, and awkwardness.
- Once seated on the platform you should not come down unless absolutely necessary.
- Walking back and forth – on and off the platform is a distraction.
- It should be made certain in advance that there are a sufficient number of platform chairs, that they are properly arranged, and that the right number of programs are available.
- The kneeling of the ministers on the rostrum should be done in order and with grace. Each should kneel on both knees and at the same time. It would be well if the one in

charge of the service would say Amen just loud enough for the platform group to hear Amen. This is a signal for all to rise together with grace and dignity. If the ministers kneel toward the platform chairs, as in some places they continue to do, it should have been agreed before that all turn in unison either to the right or to the left in facing the congregation. One should never rise before the Leader.

- Program participants who are not seated on the podium should be nearby and ready to fulfill their assignment.... not coming from the congregation delaying the service. There should be a seamless transition between participants.
- The one designated to offer the invocation prayer should be in the pulpit by the time the singing is completed and should either gesture with the uplifted hand or say, "Let us pray." Many times, one begins to pray without informing the congregation. This encourages irreverence on the part of the stranger or those unfamiliar with the order of service, and they are not properly prepared to enter the prayer.
- Carefulness in dress is an important consideration. The minister and should always be clothed in a manner befitting the dignity of his position. A mirror aids one in making a check of his personal appearance before going onto the platform.
- To allow the eyes to wander about the auditorium, scrutinizing the light fixtures, looking out of the windows, et cetera, during the preaching is a breach of good platform manners. The same can be said of closing the eyes and dozing. No matter how boring the sermon might be, this is inexcusable.
- It is inappropriate for anyone on the platform to whisper. Whispering and talking on the platform are disrespectful and irreverent.
- While the worship service is in progress, you should be concentrating on worship, demonstrate good posture and countenance the congregation is watching you.
- Always speak audibly and distinctly.
- Learn how to use the microphones properly. Speak directly into the microphone, but do not swallow it.
- The speaker and those who share the platform with him should sing with the congregation. Singing is as much a part of worship as praying and preaching. How strange that people go to church for the professed purpose of worshiping the Lord and yet refuse to do so while there, by not singing with the congregation!
- All those on the platform should participate in the offering. This too is a significant part of our worship to God. It may be true that the pastor or the visiting ministers have contributed earlier that day in another church they have visited. But this cannot be explained to the congregation. Even if it means that one must divide his offering, or sacrifice more, in order to give when he is required to be on the platform several times in one day, he should give willingly.
- As the pastor makes a solid point or enunciates a solemn truth, why not express approval by a hearty Amen! It is to be lamented that in many of our churches this practice has become almost extinct, and the Amen corner of the church has become silent. It is recognized that this could be carried to excess, but a few Amens during the sermon will not give cause for offense and could do much to contribute to the inspiration and fervor of the speaker.
- Memorize a benediction which is a form of blessing and dismissal pronounced by a designated minister/missionary/member at the close of a service.

-Frequently used *Benedictions* are:

“The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another” (Genesis 31:49b).

“The Lord bless and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace” (Numbers 6:24-26).

“Now may the grace of God and the sweet communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” (II Corinthians 13:14).

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and ever. Amen.” (Jude 24-25).

- Always wait for an invitation from the minister in charge before you take a seat in the pulpit.
- If you are visiting another church and have not had the opportunity to speak to the pastor or the minister in charge before service begins, sit in the congregation.
- Always acknowledge the pastor who allows you to preach in his/her pulpit. The pastor is showing trust and confidence in you by allowing you to minister the Word to his/her congregation.
- Always encourage the pastor who allows you to preach in her/his pulpit.
- Give the pastor some encouragement publicly or privately. Send a thank you card or note to the pastor who invited you.

*Sources: The Christian Woman's Guide for Church Protocol and Sainly Decorum: Dr. Barbara McCoo-Lewis; Protocol Guidelines and Procedures; Mother Diane Bogan*

*NOTES*