

USHER

A MINISTRY DESCRIPTION FOR LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS

Introduction

God asks the church to be a fellowship sharing a common purpose and continually growing in faith. Paul describes the church as Christ's "body" (Eph. 1:22).

People experience the presence of Jesus Christ in the world through the ministry of the church. When your local church serves the needs of people, members and non-members, it is an expression of the love of Christ. The church is a servant body, created for service. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

Christ calls every member of the church into ministry. The church is "a kingdom of priests" (I Peter 2:9). As an usher, you are a minister of hospitality and caring in the church. Every Christian believer is called to ministry, gifted by the Holy Spirit, and in baptism ordained for ministry (Eph. 4:11-12).

Shortly after Pentecost, the gift of hospitality (Rom. 12:13, I Tim. 3:2, I Peter 4:9) was first exercised specifically for the church and those whom Christ died to save. As believers praised God, they had favor with people. Their love for one another attracted others to their fellowship and "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).

God supplies each person in the church with the resources for ministry—scripture, spiritual power, God's character, and spiritual gifts. An usher is equipped for his or her ministry by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These spiritual gifts are special abilities given by the Holy Spirit to make their ministry effective and build up the body of Christ.

When people come to church they are sometimes burdened, sad or discouraged. Each person, member or newcomer, comes with the hope that the Sabbath will be an experience of uplift and inspiration, a time of renewal and celebration. The skillful usher helps to make this a reality for those in attendance.

Although an usher's love should be no stronger than is the love found in the rest of the body of Christ, nevertheless the usher performs a major role in ensuring that people see and experience that love. In Christ, you have received God's unconditional love, and, in Christ, you are called to extend that same unconditional love to others. The ministry of ushering is one of the most crucial because it is one of the most visible in the church.

Duties of the Usher

The ministry to which a person is called when he or she becomes a church usher can best be described in the following ways:

1. *Greet worshippers*, making every attempt to help them feel welcome and at ease.
2. *Escort members* and guests to their seats.
3. *Distribute materials* related to the service/meeting such as bulletins, hymnals, hand-outs, etc.
4. *Receive certain offerings*, delivering them promptly to the treasury department of the church.
5. *Maintain an alertness* for any emergency that may arise, relieving the need or contacting the person(s) needed to provide the proper assistance.
6. *Direct individuals* out of the service/meeting in an orderly fashion (in most instances row by row), leaving the auditorium or room ready for the next service or meeting.

Resource Materials

The following resources are recommended for your ministry. You can purchase these by calling AdventSource (800-328-0525), the Adventist Book Center (800-765-6955) or your local Christian bookstore.

A Handbook For Church Ushers, Miller and Nygaard (1955, Murray and Gee).

Extending a Warm and Caring Welcome. A seminar to train greeters.

First Impressions Matter. A video seminar that prepares greeters to welcome everyone into God's house.

How to Say Hello Without Saying Good-bye, by James Zackrison. Learn how to set up a receptionist/hospitality system in your church.

Prospective Members, by Brook and Thomas Stafford. Identify prospects, learn follow-up methods and see how interests can become followers of Jesus.

Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual.

The Work of the Usher, by Alvin D. Johnson, (1966, Judson Press).

Ushers Guide for Ushers Pride, by Kenneth Washington. A manual for training and equipping ushers. Includes primary responsibilities and instructions for special services.

You Can Keep Them, by James Cress. How to assimilate visitors and new members into your church.

Visit AdventSource On-Line at www.adventsource.org for a complete list of the latest resources available for local church leaders. You can place an order or request a catalog by calling 1-800-328-0525.

For information about additional resources and answers to your questions call the Adventist Plusline at 1-800-732-7587 or visit them on-line at www.plusline.org.