

STEWARDS AND USHERS



FULL GOSPEL CHURCH OF GOD

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STEWARDS AND USHERS

1 Cor. 14:40 "But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner"
The task of stewards and ushers should be seen as a ministry. It is primarily a ministry of love and joy, and a very important function in the local church which shows an interest in each person as an individual.

THE TERMS STEWARDS AND USHERS

Steward means: "Master of Politeness". Not all stewards are always or necessarily deacons and so this term cannot be used interchangeably.

The stewards and ushers are the first point of contact a visitor has with the church and should embody the spirit of the church by extending a warm, friendly greeting to every visitor, showing sincere interest in their comfort.

Enthusiastic stewards and ushers who regard their duty as a powerful person-to-person ministry are commendable. Special attention should be paid to the development of the skills of these people because they determine how receptive a visitor will be to that which he should receive - first impressions are lasting.

FUNCTIONS OF USHERS

Psalm 84:10 "I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God"

The chief duty of an usher is to greet each person attending the service in a friendly way and to specifically welcome visitors.

It stands to reason that these brethren must be of a friendly nature and able to comfortably communicate with people.

The usher should under no circumstances leave his position. If he is requested for one or other reason to assist elsewhere, he should summon the Head Steward. Depending on the size of the assembly and the building, there should be two ushers at each entrance.

The usher needn't introduce himself to visitors unless they do so first. A self-assured, friendly greeting like "You are most welcome here with us; we trust your visit will be a blessed experience" is sufficient.

At least one usher should be at his post during the course of the service as well as afterwards. Although the Pastor greets the people himself at the main entrance, he often requires the assistance of an usher. Other exits should be manned by ushers who should greet each person, bidding them farewell.

When a person, whether visitor or member, leaves the church during the course of a service, the usher on duty should escort the person outside without asking why the person is leaving; rather just wish him well with the words: "I am very sorry you have to leave the service so early". Hopefully the person will then provide the reason on his own accord, which should later be related to the Pastor.

(Use your own discretion in this regard e.g. is the service longer than usual, etc. In which case follow-up is unnecessary)

A person, who leaves the building and returns again, should be encouraged to sit at the back, especially whilst the Pastor is busy preaching.

STANDARD AND CONDUCT OF STEWARDS

In chapter 40 of Ezekiel the Prophet talks about a new temple and mentions in verses 45 and 46 persons “who keep charge of the temple” and “who keep charge of the altar.” The ministry of the stewards and ushers are important because a fine steward contributes much to the church-attendants’ joy to enter the house of the Lord on Sunday. They welcome the visitors and make them feel somebody is interested in them.

The steward’s ministry is not intended for self-elevation, but to the glory of God. Just as the pastor preaches through the Spirit, and the singer sings in the Spirit, so the steward should do his tasks in the power of the Spirit, while glorifying God.

The stewards and ushers are often the first official representatives of Jesus Christ that are met by people visiting the house of God. They may even be the only individuals with whom the visitor has contact.

As John the Baptist prepared the way for the ministry of Jesus, so the steward prepares the way for each ministry which is to form part of the service; his attitude is therefore of utmost importance.

FUNCTIONS OF THE STEWARD

The inattentive steward who allows his thoughts to roam reduces the effectiveness of his ministry. He should follow Paul’s advice in Colossians 3:23-24 “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as unto the Lord ...”

Stewards are there to give personal attention to each individual and must therefore be prepared to accept people as they are, and not as they wish them to be.

Pay attention to where regular attendants sit; people have a tendency to sit in the same pew at each service. People will notice the thoughtfulness of the steward who remembers their seating habits and appreciate it.

Each steward should be allotted a specific section in the church, with particular reference to seating - know your block and know your people. Distinguish between open seats and a seat where someone has just left for a moment.

Pay particular attention to visitors, especially persons visiting for the first time. Let them always feel like guests of honour with: “a special place just for you”. Notice whether they have songbooks, visitor’s cards, a pencil, and bulletin, etc.

PROCEDURE

The head steward and deputy should be nominated by the Pastor and appointed by the evangelism committee (or board concerned with church growth). Both should serve on this committee.

Both these persons should have strong leadership and organizational skills with the ability to communicate comfortably with people. It goes without saying that they (like every usher) must love people and the house of the Lord.

DUTIES OF THE HEAD STEWARD

The head steward is responsible for the efficient organising and functioning of the panel of ushers.

- He recommends persons to the Pastor to serve on the panel.
- He must see to it that the ushers know what their function is and act accordingly.
- He arranges which steward(s) should be on duty at the entrance and other strategic places.
- He arranges the taking up of the offering and distributing of collections plates.
- He arranges the distribution of songbooks, bulletins etc.
- He hands the offering over to the treasurer and is the contact person between the panel and the administration departments.
- He is responsible for the distribution of visitor's cards, pencils etc. to the panel.
- He receives all completed visitors cards, does the first sorting and then presents them to the Pastor and the secretary respectively.
- He should compile a report for presentation to the evangelism committee meeting.
- It is expected that the Head steward promotes a good group-spirit amongst the panel by:
 - A correct attitude
 - Regular informal meetings
 - Monthly meetings

It is also advantageous for him to involve the spouses (where applicable) of the panel at the informal gatherings where the importance of this ministry is emphasised.

DUTIES OF THE DEPUTY HEAD STEWARD

He assists the Head steward in all of his duties and takes charge in the absence of the former.

He is responsible for controlling the stock of visitor's cards and pencils and to have the latter always sharpened.

He takes care of the name tags.

He must see that the name tags are returned after each service.

He helps arrange informal gatherings.

DUTIES OF THE USHERS

Ushers on duty must be at their posts at least 30 minutes before the start of the service; you should wait for the people – they should never wait for you.

Upon arrival name tags and stationery should be collected from the Head steward. Avoid crowding during services.

The main aim of each usher is to help with greeting and introduction of new arrivals into the “body of saints (believers)” in an orderly manner and with an attitude of love and joy.

Welcome people and show them to their seats.

Hand out cards and most importantly, give a brief explanation of what is involved.

When people are to be seated (especially strangers), the usher should recommend the best seating. He must never ask “Where would you like to sit?” for this may land him in a predicament.

When accompanying people, the usher leads at a comfortable pace, otherwise the people might “vanish” and, to his own embarrassment and the amusements of the teenagers, he will arrive at the seats alone.

People must always be accompanied to their seats and once the intended seats are reached the usher forms a ‘gate’ by placing the back of his hand against the back support of the chair or pew in front. IT IS AN UNPARDONABLE ERROR FOR AN USHER TO DIRECT PEOPLE TO SEATING BY MERELY POINTING TO IT.

The usher should encourage people to sit near the front of the church as it is good policy to fill the church from the front, but the person who insists to sit at the back should rather be allowed to do so, than run the risk of him leaving the building.

We often make use of a “moving” usher whose duty is the same as that of an usher, but without an allotted section. He acts as substitute when the other usher is attending to people. (In smaller assemblies this is not necessary). It is not wise to use the Head steward, Deputy Steward or the other ushers for this task.

It should be noted that an usher’s duties only end when the church building is totally vacated. During the benediction, all ushers again assume their positions at the rear of the church. Remember not to remove the name tags until all tasks are completed.

It is also customary to place ushers at strategic points throughout the entire service, e.g. near the entrance of the Mothers’ room, to give direction to the Children’s Church etc.

RETRIEVING THE VISITORS’ CARDS

The cards are normally retrieved at the beginning of the service. Start from the front and work your way to the back – not vice versa.

Once an usher has retrieved the cards in his block, they are handed to the Head Steward.

Visitors' cards and offerings must never be collected simultaneously.

THE OFFERING

Taking up an offering has been part of the worship service since the time of Paul (1Cor. 16:1-2) and is part of the ushers' duty. The Head steward arranges how this will be carried out, and distributes the collection plates.

The time and manner in which the offering is received, is left to the discretion of the Pastor. Ushers should be ready to receive the offering at all times and should not become distracted.

ATTIRE AND APPEARANCE

It should be mentioned that both ladies and gentlemen can be used as ushers and stewards.

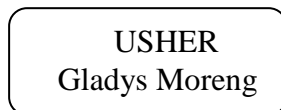
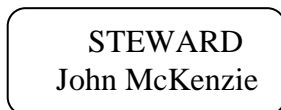
Ushers should pay meticulous attention to their personal appearance because they are the first point of contact with visitors and their appearance will make a lasting impression.

Men should, as far as possible, be dressed in a suit and the ladies in neat two-piece-outfits or dresses. Do not wear flamboyant colours or clothes. REMEMBER you are the "showpiece" of the assembly.

Name tags are a necessity and all duties should be done wearing a tag.

The following can increase the visibility and identification of ushers and stewards:

- ❖ Name tags e.g.



- ❖ Corsages
- ❖ Matching jackets and/or pants – for the men
- ❖ Uniformity of outfits – for the ladies etc.

It also gives persons more authority in the execution of their duties.

PERSONAL REQUIREMENTS OF A STEWARD OR USHER

QUALIFICATIONS

- Must be saved and live an exemplary life
- Must have a strong faith
- Must be able to control his tongue
- Must be faithful in that which is least
- Must pray regularly
- Must allow the holy Spirit to lead him

STEWARDS AND USHERS

- Must be friendly

APPEARANCE

- Personal neatness
- Deodorant
- Mouthwash
- Tidy hair
- Clean-shaven
- Clothes ironed
- Shoes polished, tidy
- Clean shirt, tie, blouse etc.

DESCRIPTION OF DUTY

- Punctual (30 minutes)
- Never leave their post
- Don't take over
- Concentrate on the service
- Pay particular attention to visitors
- Sufficient stationery, songbooks, bulletins, etc.
- Always prepared to obey instructions.

GUIDELINES:

- Fill the church from the front
- Seat people near one another
- Notice the number of empty seats in a pew and accompany the people there
- Seat latecomers at the rear so as not to disturb the service
- Pews marked: "Mothers and babies" or "Senior Citizens" are strictly for said persons.

ATTITUDE

- Pride in their ministry
- Optimistic about their church
- Communicate easily
- Friendly appearance
- Not judgmental\No comments
- Prayerful
- Not familiar

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