

NEW HOPE CHURCH OF GOD

ALTAR WORKERS TRAINING

Altar Workers New Hope Church of God

This Lesson was produced by Bishop Philip Bonaparte

It will be transferred as was originally written.

Acts 2:37, “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?*”

In the last couple of months, we have been having some wonderful services . . . some of the best we have had here at New Hope Church of God.

- We have had many who gave their hearts to Jesus Christ at the altar.
- Several new families joined the church.
- Several baptized in water and the Holy Spirit.
- And many of our guests have returned multiple times.

I believe this is going to continue and get better in the weeks and months to come.

However, the more guests we have and the more that receive the New Birth experience, the more prepared we have to be as the church.

The Apostle Paul said: *“Let all things be done decently and in order.”* **1 Cor. 14:40.**

We must be prepared to minister to our guests.

- Jesus Christ is our heavenly father, but the church is the mother!
- The mother is the one who goes through child bearing.
- You and I are the church.

The church has to be involved in the birthing process because she is the mother!

Where are babies birthed into the church? . . . at the altar!

Tonight, I want to talk about our altar services, I haven’t taught on this topic well over a year, and I want to address a few things tonight that I believe will help all of us!

I am a physician, and when I travel and meet people, I take notice of their appearance.

Because of who I am, I am extra aware of details that the average person might not notice.

- I notice the trash on the floor, the floodlights that are left on.
- I can tell if someone has a thyroid disease by looking in the eyes.
- I notice how people walk.
- I notice the quality of people's work.
- I am keenly aware of the quality of workmanship.

And it bothers me when things are not done as well as well as they could be!

- Auto mechanics notice when a car is not running right . . . and it bothers them.
- Doctors know when a person is not well . . . and it bothers them.
- Parents know when something is wrong with their kids . . . and it bothers them.

The same is true for those in ministry.

- We notice when things are not well in the church.
- We notice when the altar call is not what it should be.
- Lady Tracy notices when our worship is off.
- Rev. Selwyn notices when the music is out of tune.
- Bro. Joseph notices when the sound is distorted.

We are sensitive to what should be and what could be.

We are sensitive to what is happening and what is not happening.

As great as our altar services are, they could be much better!

We must be sensitive to the fact that the altar service is the most important part of the service.

We spend a lot of time at the altar . . . but because, we are in the altar so much.

- It becomes familiar.
- It becomes a habit.
- It becomes something we are used to do quickly.
- We tend to shut down our worship and praise just after a few minutes.

But as the church . . . as the mother . . . we have to guard against this with everything we have.

- We cannot view the altar service as the end of the service!
- We cannot allow ourselves to shut down a couple of minutes at the altar.
- This is where new life is born.
- This is where it all begins for somebody.

The altar call is the most important part of our service!

- Most of us pray everyday . . . and we should.
- Often we don't have an immediate need when we come to the altar . . . but that doesn't mean we shouldn't pray.

- Since we are the mother, we are called to be sensitive to the needs of the spiritual babies in our altars.

We come and pray because others have needs at the altar!

When two or three agree in Jesus Name . . . it shall be done!

More often than not we are praying for someone!

- We must be willing to stay with them until their needs are met.
- That is what is expected of any mother.
- We must pray with them until they break through!

It is likely that life changing decisions will be made of the words that you share with them, and the time that you spend praying with them!

Souls are hanging in the balance; decisions are eternal . . . there is no more important moment during our service than this!

If all we ever do is come and pray for just a couple of minutes, and then shut it down, we will never accomplish what desires through us!

So be sensitive to the needs in the altar.

Beware of things the average person might not notice . . .

- Beware of who the visitors are.
- Find out who needs the Holy Spirit and who doesn't.
- Look for signs of positive response during the service.
 - Tears.
 - Smiles.
 - Nodding of the head or clapping of the hands.
 - Sometimes people will even lower their heads as God's Spirit begins to convict them.

. . . at the same time don't stare at a visitor to the point where they become uncomfortable.

In the process of doing all of this the Altar Worker must still participate and even lead in worship and praise.

Unite with the preacher . . . just as the preacher is anointed to preach, you must be anointed in your response!

[Let me spend a minute here:](#)

On Sunday's during our service you are going to hear the Gospel message preached very often.

- It won't be the same message and text, but it will be the same Gospel!
- Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
- The New Birth.
- The death, burial and resurrection.

The danger is, we have heard the Gospel message a thousand times.

- It has become familiar.

- To some even mundane.
- Then our response become mundane.
- Our approach to the altar become mundane.
- And our prayers become mundane.

Here is where the problem lies. **If we are not excited about the Gospel message, then neither will our guests be excited about it.**

- If we are not excited about Jesus . . . neither will our guests be.
- If we are not excited about our church . . . neither will our guests be.
- They can find that kind of church down the road.
- Do we have a message worth getting excited over?
- Is Jesus worth shouting over?
- Is the Holy Ghost worth jumping over?

We have to show it . . . and I am not talking about putting on a show for our guests. It must come from the heart!

We are talking about being sensitive.

As the altar call approaches, be sensitive to the Holy Ghost . . . God may be leading you to pray for a specific person!

If that person(s) is not in the altar go back and approach them and offer to god to the altar and pray . . . but if they refuse, respect their wish and let them know that you will be will be praying for them!

Once in the altar, be sensitive to those in need.

- Especially sinners and visitors.
- Don't leave them alone for more than a few moments.
- They may not understand what is happening.

Remember what our text said?

Acts 2:37

*“Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, **Men and brethren, what shall we do?***

- Peter had just preached a powerful and convincing message.
 - People were ready to make a change in their hearts.
 - They wanted to do something.
- . . . **but they had no clue what to do!**

Just because there is an awesome message preached doesn't mean people are going to pray through . . . they need instruction

- They may feel the presence of God and not understand it.
- They may not understand what it means to repent.

- They may not even understand how to respond to God.

So it is important that you go to them quickly!

Peter was the first altar worker in Pentecost. He gave them instructions and three thousand receive the Holy Ghost that same day.

We need instruction in our altars!

In Acts chapter eight, Philip was preaching to the Samaritans . . . they heard the word, believed, and were baptized . . .

Acts 8:14:14.

*“Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, **they sent unto them Peter and John: who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:** (for as yet He was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost.”*

. . . it wasn't until Peter and John came and laid hands on them that they received the Holy Ghost!

Peter and John were altar workers . . . they were the ones experienced in praying people through to the Holy Ghost!

In Acts, chapter 16, the Philippian jailer thought Paul and Silas escaped from prison.

- He knew it was a miracle of God and was convicted . . . but he didn't know how to respond, so he asked the question . . . **“What must I do to be saved?”**
- Paul immediately responded by saying you must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ . . . and then he spoke the word of the Lord to him and his whole house!

Guess what happened? They were all baptized and saved that very same night!
They received instruction!

- In Acts, chapter 19, the Ephesian disciples did not get baptized until someone explained Jesus' Baptism to them.
- They didn't even know what the Holy Ghost was.
- They did not receive the Holy Ghost until Paul explained and laid his hands on them and prayed for them!

Paul was an altar worker who gave instruction!

**People need instruction in the altar.
They don't understand how to connect with God.**

Often all they know is that there is something drawing them, there is something pulling them.

We are meeting these people at the most important moment in their life . . . we are meeting them at their cross roads . . . we may very well be the one who points them in the right direction!

They don't understand it because they are transitioning from the realm of the flesh to the realm of the Spirit!

The reason they don't understand is simply because they haven't been given the instructions from the Word of God!

Instructions are important!

Three things are necessary for them to connect with God!

1. Faith
2. Worship
3. Instruction

You know they have at least a little faith or they wouldn't even be at the altar.

Worship, hopefully has been taking place all service long!

Instructions have usually been given during the word . . . but there are many things that may not be addressed during the preaching.

The altar worker then becomes the coach or navigator for the seeker!

It is very important that altar workers are prepared when they come to the altar.

There are a number of things that we need to do to be prepared!

1. **Faithfulness!**
 - Faithful in your attendance!
 - Faithful in your stewardship!
 - Faithful in your personal walk with God!
2. **Accountability to Spiritual Authority!**
 - God's anointing always flows from above!
 - If we do not follow God's intended plan of authority . . . then His anointing and Spirit will be withheld!
3. **A Mindset of Ministry!**
 - We must love people!
 - We must have a servant's heart!
 - We must have a burden and passion for each person we pray with!

- We must have faith that God will provide.

4. **Commitment!**

- Commitment is a by-product of burden!
- This is not just a Sunday calling!
- The job of an altar worker begins on Monday and everyday between then and Sunday!

Remember, the church is the mother.

- A mother prays harder than anyone for the salvation of a lost child!
- Are you praying for those who need salvation?
- Are you praying every day?
- Are you praying before service?

Are you fasting for those who need the Holy Spirit?

- Fasting adds strength to your prayers.
- Fasting is a cure for unbelief.
- It humbles us!
- It crucifies the flesh and makes way for the spirit!

Are you willing to stay and pray with that person as long as they need to pray?

- One of the most powerful hindrances to commitment is laziness!
- The Bible says that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak!
- Sometimes we are too lazy to pray.

We must also be committed in worship!

- Worship invites God into our lives!
- Worship during the service and during the week!

5. **Sensitivity to the service . . . and the altar call!**

- Pay attention to the preaching!
- Reinforce what was preached if it applies!
- **Following the direction of leadership.**
- Be sensitive to the type of altar call given by the minister and follow directions.

The Holy Spirit may be leading the minister in a specific manner.

- Anticipate what the leader needs during the altar call
- The pastor may rotate from one person to the next but they may still need you to keep praying with that one person!
- Be aware of the Pastor or altar leader . . . they may be wanting your attention to go and pray with a specific person.

- Be aware of others who are praying with that same person . . . if they are an altar worker and have already connected with that person, then let them continue to guide that person!
- Work as a team . . . one person speaking and guiding, while others intercede!
- **This is important . . . be aware of those hindering by their prayers . . . you may have to rescue somebody.**

6. Knowledge of the Word!

Rom. 10:17: *“So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”*

We are instructed to study to show ourselves approved.

Knowing what the Word says can be one of the most powerful tools of an altar worker!

Memorize the word . . . if we know what God has promised through His word then we can share those same promises with the person we are working with!

There are five key chapters that every altar worker should have great knowledge of . . .

- (1) Acts 2 . . . the day of Pentecost.
- (2) Acts 8 . . . Philip preaching to the Samaritans.
- (3) Acts 10 . . . Salvation to the household of Cornelius . . . these were the first Gentiles to receive the Holy Ghost!
- (4) Acts 16 . . . Salvation to the Philippian jailer and his household.
- (5) Acts 19 . . . the Ephesians disciples being re-baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost!

You don't have to be a theologian to be an altar worker. Just the new birth experience! Be filled with the Holy Spirit.

How many of you still want to be an altar worker?

Approaching the altar.

The first thing you do is introduce yourself. Ask their name and remember it.

From that point forward always address them by their name! People really like that!

1. Don't use church lingo with visitors . . . they won't know how to reach to that.
2. Ask them what they want from the Lord . . . don't assume you already know!
3. Give instruction if needed.
4. Repent with them . . . it is a we/us thing! This makes them more comfortable!
5. Then pray for their need! If they are seeking the Holy Ghost, ask them to start thanking God for the Holy Ghost . . . He is a gift!
6. Agree with them that God is going to fill them!
7. When you are done praying ask them if they felt like God has met their need!

8. If they were praying for the Holy Ghost . . . ask them if they spoke in tongues! Explain what just happened!
9. If they want to continue praying . . . pray with them again!
10. Always be polite, and let them know that God is doing a great work in their life!

Point them in the right direction when they are done . . .

- Baptism?
- Bible Study . . . see the pastor?
- Youth Group?
- Men's or Ladies meetings?

The following is my addition based on our emphasis to sincerely acknowledge God in our service as Altar Workers:

Eph. 6:7 NKJV

“. . . with goodwill doing service as to the Lord, and not to men.”

LESSON: ALTAR WORKERS NEW HOPE CHURCH OF GOD

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the major reasons why there is such a great need for Altar Workers here at New Hope . . . (base on the Presentation by Bishop Bonaparte)

2. In essence, what very important lesson is being taught in 1 Cor. 14:40 (As noted in our lesson)?

3. A two-part question:

- (a) The church is referred to as the mother but where are the babies born into the church?
- (b) Give a brief explanation of the mother's role in the of giving birth (mother as being symbolic or the church ... discussed in our lesson).

4. Why is it important to pay attention to details?

5. Why is the altar service regarded as the most important part of the service?

6. Why the altar should never be taken for granted, as just a place that we routinely go, etc.?

7. As Altar Workers in what areas do we need to be sensitive?

8. Choose the correct answer:
Acts2:37 “. . . *Men and brethren, what shall we do?*” **This question shows us . . .**
(a) The state of the enquiring mind under the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.
(b) It shows those at the crossroad desiring to know which route to take.
(c) It shows the need of those who are in need of instructions.
(d) It shows the need to have someone who is able to help.

9. As seen on page 6 of our lesson ... complete the following:
“We need (a) _____ in our (b) _____. Our altar services will never be (c) _____ without (d) _____.”

10. What three things are necessary for seekers to connect with God?

11. List six things that the Altar Worker needs in order to prepare for service.

12. On page 11 (of our lesson), name two important preliminary approaches given with the seeker at the altar.

13. In a more comprehensive manner ten things have been listed in working with seekers at the altar. How many of these can you list (briefly)?

14. In what areas of the church services do you point the seeker to upon receiving help at the altar (or even in general)?

LESSON: ALTAR WORKERS NEW HOPE CHURCH OF GOD

ANSWERS FOR REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **Answer:**
 - (a) A rapidly growing congregation which means more seekers for salvation, Holy Spirit Baptism and other needs.
 - (b) The pastor alone cannot effectively do it all . . . laborers are needed in the vineyard.Page 1

2. **Answer:**

Let all things be done decently and in order. Page 1

3. **Answer:**
 - (a) Babies are born into the church at the altar.
 - (b) The mother's role (i.e. The Church)
 - (1) The mother is the one who goes through child bearing.
 - (2) The mother is the one who does most of the child rearing. Page 1

4. **Answer:**
 - (a) It helps us to see things in their right perspective and able to quickly detect what need attention, adjustments, etc.
 - (b) It makes us sensitive to what should be done and what could be.
 - (c) It makes sensitive to what is happening and what is not happening.Page 2

5. **Answer:**
 - (a) It is a time of eternal decision. (b) A time when souls are hanging in the balance.
 - (c) A time when individuals with their burdens are seeking help. Pages 2-3

6. **Answer:**
 - (a) In doing so we defeat the very purpose of the altar (it is a time when sacrifices are made and experiencing an encounter with God).
 - (b) It makes the altar become mundane.
 - (c) It makes our response become mundane.
 - (d) It makes our approach to the altar become mundane.
 - (e) It makes the altar service become mundane.
 - (f) It makes our prayer become mundane.
 - (g) **If we as Altar Workers and believers are not enthused about Christ neither will the seekers be; we need to have something that can be passed on to them.**Pages 4-5

7. **Answer:**
 (a) Sensitive to the leading of God.
 (b) Sensitive to the preacher's method being utilized.
 (c) Sensitive to the need of the seekers. Page 5
8. **Answer:**
 (a) The state of the enquiring mind under the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.
 (b) It shows those at the crossroad desiring to know which route to take.
 (c) It shows the need of those who are in need of instructions.
 (d) It shows the need to have someone who is able to help. Page 6
9. **Answer:**
 (a) instruction
 (b) altar
 (c) successful
 (d) altar workers Page 6
10. **Answer:**
 Faith, worship and instruction. Page 8
11. **Answer:**
 (a) Faithfulness.
 (b) Accountability to spiritual authority.
 (c) A mindset of ministry.
 (d) Commitment.
 (e) Sensitivity to the service . . . and the altar call.
 (f) Knowledge of the Word. Page 8-11
12. **Answer:**
 (a) Introduce yourself, ask their name and remember it.
 (b) From that point forward address them by their first name Page 11
13. **Answer:**
 (a) Don't use church lingo with visitors . . . they won't know how to react to that!
 (b) Ask them what they want from the Lord . . . don't assume you already know.
 (c) Give them instruction if needed.
 (d) Repent with them . . . it is a we/us thing! This make them more comfortable.
 (e) Etc.
See Pages 11-12 for more information.
14. **Answer:**
 (a) Baptism
 (b) Bible Study . . . see the pastor.

(c) The various church auxiliaries and activities.

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