

NEW HOPE CHURCH OF GOD

ALTAR WORKERS TRAINING

PRACTICAL POINTERS WORKING THE ALTAR PRACTICAL SESSION

These pointers are essential preparation that will help us as we prepare for our “Practical Sessions” serving at the altar. It is very important because we should never expect quality performance without instructions. secular institutions do not expect their employees to perform effectively without experience or educating them in the areas needed.

Sad to note but many local congregations fall into the trap of expecting from their people what they cannot give because they lack knowledge and expertise. Many examples could be given but here are three . . . (Briefly Noted)

1. Evangelism will be demanded and the members shown their lack of performance, etc. when they do not know how to present the gospel, there is also the situation where the tools that are available are not acquainted with, sad to note that in some situations there is not an effective program in place. In such a situation very little accomplishment will be realized.
2. Sometimes someone is appointed to an office without taking into consideration the qualifications, functions, etc. of that office; neither were discussed with the person appointed but at the same time there is the expectation of outstanding performance.
3. Sometimes instructions are given inappropriately, for example during a service or a function and obviously such practice only leads to mistakes, frustrations, embarrassment, etc. How much different it would have been if the necessary information was communicated properly.

The above listing could go on but the point has been made: **we need to educate effectively.** The Bible speaks of the people perishing because of a lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6). The other side of the coin is for us to apply the information passed on to us, so we do not look in the mirror and then forget but continue in the things that we have learnt (James 1:19-27).

1. Note carefully Practical Pointers sets 1 and 2.
2. Review this presentation “Practical Pointers Working the Altar”.
3. Carefully go through Lessons 1, 2,3, and 4.
4. Note carefully Supplementary Material: “Sharing the Gospel,” as well as other materials presented in these classes.

You have been made aware of the principles, program, procedures, etc. of the Altar Worker, **now it's for you to make the application.** The wonderful thing is that we can accomplish our goals through Jesus Christ who strengthens us (Phil. 4:13).

1. **Gather around the altar orderly.**
 - (a) Generally, this is done by standing side by side facing the altar.
 - (b) The pastor/preacher may specify what he/she wants; please follow instructions.

2. **Have the seekers at the altar positioned in an orderly formation.**
 - (a) **If you have a normal overflow of seekers**
 - (1) Have the first responders in a single line across, facing the altar.
 - (2) The other seekers can remain in the center aisle where they will wait until they are called.
 - (3) Fill in spaces at the altar with those in the center aisle as space is made available at the altar.
 - (4) Seekers can return to their seats by using the sides aisles.
 - (b) **If we have an above the normal overflow** *(For example when praying for all in attendance or even when we have an overflow in attendance).*
 - (1) Seekers will form lines using the side aisles and return to their seats using the center aisle.
 - (2) Obviously, the first set of seekers will be at the altar in the general formation; as space is made available at the altar, position the other seekers alternately.
 - When calling persons from two lines, we should call one person from section or line A and the next from section or line B or if possible from both sides at the same time.
 - If ministers are used to pray for seekers, fill in the vacant systematically ... this means that those guiding the flow of seekers to the altar will have to be attentive.
 - (c) **If we have a normal response** (that is, all seekers can form a line across the altar.).
 - (1) Arrange the seekers orderly.
 - (2) Sometimes others will move forward during the altar service . . . we will still maintain an orderly formation and give an opportunity for each person to be prayed for. As possible someone should monitor additional seekers.
 - (d) **The main objectives are:**
 - (1) Maintain an orderly procedure.
 - (2) Allow the pastor/preacher to pray for seekers in a systematic pattern and as a result make the transaction more manageable.
 - (3) It also ensures that no one is left out or feels neglected.
 - (4) The ultimate goal is that God is glorified and His will is done!

3. **Position Yourself Behind the Seeker to Be Prayed for.**
 - (a) Keep your eyes on the person being prayed for . . . sometimes individuals go down (under) easily . . . be attentive.
 - (b) Avoid using one hand to help the person when he/she is going down, this can result in injury for you or the person falling.

- (c) In some situation, an individual may need more than one person to catch him/her as they fall . . . in such situation, as soon as he/she is being prayed for **get help . . . BE PREPARED!!**
- (d) **TEAM WORK IS A MOST ESSENTIAL FACTOR NOT TO BE OVERLOOKED NOR IGNORED!!** There have been situations where help has been refused even though it was needed. This we must guard against as we work as a team to the glory of God and we must guard against endangering yourself as well as seekers.
4. **SCAN THE ALTAR PERIODICALLY!**
- (a) As a team, make sure that the procedures and standards of our ministry are functioning as intended.
- (b) **Allow leadership to be in control, follow instructions and let everything be done in the essence of “TEAM WORK” to the glory of God!!**
- (c) If another Altar Worker needs help please respond to that need.
- (d) If a seeker has no one assisting, make sure help is obtained (whether through the pastor/preacher, one of the ministers or the leader of the Altar Worker’s Ministry). **No seeker should be left unattended; someone should ALWAYS be there to assist that person!!**
5. **If someone is prostrate and desires to get up**
- (a) If you can help up the person go ahead.
- (b) I do suggest that you place your arm through his/her arm to help him/her up... **CAUTIOUSLY. The person should be in the sitting position and if possible to the knees then gradually help the person up “cautiously.”**
- (c) If two persons are needed (***which has proven to be more effective***) . . . one person on either side of the person (the person is now in the sitting position ... if possible to the knees) both Altar Workers place one arm through his/her arms and raise **“cautiously.”**
- (d) When a prostrate person has been helped up, make sure that he/she is OK to walk back to his/her seat; in some situation help may be needed.
- (e) If a person is still praying: assist as needed but do not interrupt; do not leave the person in isolation.
6. **When someone is falling under, help the person down safely! If it is God’s will that the person goes down, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO DO OTHERWISE! LET GOD HAVE HIS WAY!!!**
- (a) Make sure that the person does not go down with a bang.
- (b) Make sure that where the person is about to fall is clear no benches, or other persons are in the way . . . some last minute tact may be need)
- (c) If a person is in the prostrate position protect him/her from being stepped on or others falling on him /her; etc.
7. **Concentrate on the altar service**
- (a) It’s Satan’s objective to distract; our responsibility is to remain focused as we serve.

- (b) This does not mean you are placed in a strait jacket or you wear a long face.
- (c) You can pray (there is nothing like united intercessory praying) as long as you do not disrupt those who are leading. God heard the prayers of Hannah and Nehemiah that were done silently (see 1 Sam. 1:9-18, NB Vv. 12-14; Nehemiah 2:4) likewise God will hear if you pray silently at the altar providing you are maintaining decorum to the glory of God.
- (d) Focus upon God and the needs of the seekers.
- (e) Do not be distracted with what others are doing as they minister, be under the full control of the Holy Spirit and allow Him to do what must be done!

8. **SHEETS**

- (a) Someone or a specially assigned group may be needed to oversee this aspect of the Altar Worker's Ministry.
- (b) We are to make sure that we have an adequate supply of sheets that are always available.
- (c) **ALL SHEETS should be CLEAN, properly folded and stored for future used and kept consistently at the same location.**
- (d) This supply of sheets should remain intact.
 - (1) When they are washed, they should be returned to their appropriate storage **As-Soon-As-Possible!!! Adequate supply of sheets should ALWAYS be available!!**
 - (2) If the supply of sheets deplete all efforts should be made to instantly resupply.
 - (3) We need to have a projected number of sheets and that specified number must be maintained which means that regular inventory and proper logging are necessary. As the congregation grows we should make effort to add to the required amount of sheets needed and maintain the same.
- (e) This is repeating portion of # 3 above but very important!!
The supply of sheets should be REGULARLY checked for soil, damage, quantity and action taken to maintain readiness for EACH SERVICE.
- (f) WHEN THE SHEETS ARE USED: ANOTHER REPETITION:
 - (1) Clean sheets should be properly folded and returned to their assigned place of storage.
 - (2) Soiled sheets should be cleaned and returned ASAP to the assigned place of storage.
 - (3) **Damaged sheets must be discarded and replacement made ASAP.**

We are determined, by the grace of God, to be what we ought to be and “With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.” (Eph. 6:7)