



Welcome to the You Are ... series handouts.

We hope you find this resource helpful to your ministry and to your congregation's members, visitors, and friends.

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You are

AN USHER



You have been called to provide an important ministry for the church. Congratulations! Yes, ushering is a vital part of the worship experience of any congregation. Ushers, along with the minister and others who help lead worship, assist in creating a worship environment in which life transformations can happen.

Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, “But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every supporting ligament, with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love” (Ephesians 4:15–16).

Ushering is a vital ministry, a service for the people of God. When resolving a conflict in regards to status and position, Jesus admonished His disciples saying, “whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave—just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26–28).

Following the example of Christ by giving our lives in humble service as He did, fills our lives with satisfaction and a sense of self-worth. As a doorkeeper in God's house you have great opportunity to provide meaningful service to others, which will bless your life immensely in return.

What is required of an usher?

Faith: Our love for and faith in God through Christ is the driving force that gives us the desire to do God's will, which enables us to accomplish the tasks that are set before us.

Dedication: Ushers are needed not only at regular worship services but frequently at weddings, funerals, special programs and other formal assemblies of the congregation.

The Minister and the church will rely heavily upon you to be present and to function at the appointed times. Being on time and in your place should always be made a top priority.

Personal preparation

As an usher your personal preparation should include:

Bible study: Studying God's Word should always stand tantamount as top priority.

Prayer: This is an essential ingredient to spiritual sensitivity, communion with God and understanding what the will of the Lord is for your life.

Good personal grooming: It is especially important for you to be well groomed. Since God gives the best, it should always be a high priority that we present our best before God and the people whom we serve. An usher is usually the first point of contact a visitor will have when attending a church and that first encounter will often determine whether a person will return or decide to look further. An outward appearance should represent an inward faith and strong love for God.

Training: Much of what you do as an usher can be done well simply by exercising good common sense, but some of your time will need to be invested in learning the details and the little-noticed things that ushers in your congregation do.

You may have been a member of the church one or even up to five years or more and you may have observed the ushers performing their duties many times over, but be assured that there are countless little but important things that they do and procedures

they follow routinely that you will have to learn to be an effective usher.

One of the primary goals of ushering is to maintain good order. This can be best accomplished by those who fully understand their job and its functions. Orientation sessions for new ushers along with training workshops and other training event classes are important to attend that you may stay abreast of current trends and the signs required for excellent service as an usher.

A Christian attitude: An usher must have a good attitude about serving, meeting people and greeting those coming into the house of worship; this is an usher's main function. This is why prayer and Bible study are important parts of preparing an usher. These two components of the church will help prepare you both spiritually and mentally for the task of greeting those coming through the doors of God's house.

People who are hurting and looking for compassion, will feel a sense of healing and a warm soothing presence of God's kindness as they enter God's house and you greet them with a smile and a sincere "welcome." No one wants to be greeted with a frown or a glare. Your job as an usher is to help people experience the love and hospitality of God at the threshold of entering into God's house.

Alertness: Being an usher requires that you remain alert at all times. You must be aware of what is happening among the people in the area that you are responsible for so that you will be available to any need that arises. In addition, you must be alert and ready to respond to any crisis that could occur.

A person might become ill and need medical attention, or it may even become necessary to calmly evacuate the sanctuary because of a fire or some other potential life threatening disaster.

A person under the influence of some chemical or drug dependency may enter into worship and cause a disruption that may also require your immediate but calm response.

You will need to be ready to respond in a direct but loving way also for these kinds of situations, but keep in mind there may be others in the church

better suited to handle these particular kinds of situations. Do not be afraid to call for assistance.

Recognition of your own needs: You also must remember that you are a worshiper just like those who are attending. Your own spiritual well-being and edification are important. You must be nourished and fed spiritually so that you will be able to minister to others effectively.

What are the duties of a church usher?

As an usher, you may be expected to do some or all of the following functions in the church:

- Greet the people both before and after worship services.
- At specific times before and during services, seat those entering.
- Volunteer information about church services, programs and facilities.
- Introduce visitors to church members or the Minister.
- Distribute worship bulletins.
- Be alert to special needs people might have during the service.
- If an emergency should arise, help keep people calm and know how to summon outside help.
- Help maintain a worshipful, orderly atmosphere.
- Be an evangelist.
- Fulfill other duties as assigned.

The usher as an evangelist: A good usher will be an evangelist in obedience to Christ and to all Christians to make disciples of all nations.

Remember Christ's words, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19–20).

It is your duty and privilege on behalf of Christ to witness, and your position as an usher will afford

you many opportunities to witness to others about the joys of having a strong personal relationship with God.

The “un-churched” people that you greet at the door of God’s house may see enough of the love of God in you to cause them to desire to know more about Christ and His saving grace. Do not underestimate your ability to do effective evangelism as an usher. Remember, you will be witnessing to your faith and love for God. You do this simply by virtue of being in God’s house and by the kind of work you perform on God’s behalf.

Remember that you are a leader and that you are not leading because you have sought a seat of prominence, but because you heard the call to service and have responded as the prophet Isaiah did, “Here am I; send me!” (Isaiah 6:8)

You are following the example of Christ who came “not to be served, but to serve.” (Matthew 20:28)

By giving of yourself and your talents as an usher, you are placed in a position of high visibility, and thus others will be looking to you as a leader. Lead as one who follows the Master. Follow the prophet’s advice to “do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).

Perform your duties to the best of your abilities and do all to the glory of God.

"For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God

than live in the tents of wickedness."
(Psalm 84:10)

Resources

(Several of these books are out-of-print but may be found in some church libraries.)

Paul H. D. Lang, *Church Ushering* (Concordia Publishing House, 1976.)

Homer J. R. Efford, *A Guide to Church Ushering* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1961.)

William E. Young, *The Church Ushering Committee* (The Sunday School Publishing Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1977.)

Ann and Randall Updegraff Spleth, *Worship and Spiritual Life* (Leader Development for Mission and Ministry Manual, Christian Board of Publication, 1991.)

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