



Church of God by Faith, Inc.

2409 Old Middleburg Road N. ~ Jacksonville, Florida 32210

Altar Ministry Volunteer Job Description

Volunteer Job Title:	CHURCH OF GOD BY FAITH GUIDE TO THE ALTAR MINISTRY
Reports to:	Sisters Lavern Patrick and Denise Young
Scheduled Shift:	To Be Announced
Job Location:	To Be Announced

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important duties of a church is to establish an effective Altar Ministry because it is the central purpose of the church's existence. All of the fiery messages and outreach can be squandered instantaneously if altar workers are not appropriately prepared to help others receive salvation. One of the world's greatest preachers, Charles Spurgeon articulated the importance of establishing appropriate ways to help lead others to Christ. In fact, many theologians believe he is the father of the modern altar call as articulated here:¹ "C. H. Spurgeon earnestly exhorted those who had accepted Christ as their Saviour to come forward amongst his people and avow their attachment to His person and name."

The purpose of this document is not to argue the historical origins of altar calls. It is to convey that those desirous of serving in this area should consider this writing from Spurgeon before proceeding:²

"If we make men think that conversation with ourselves or with our helpers is essential to their faith in Christ, we are taking the direct line for priestcraft. In the Gospel, the sinner and the Saviour are to come together, with none between. Speak upon this point very clearly, "You, sinner, sitting where you are, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, shall have eternal life. Do not stop till you pass into an enquiry-room. Do not think it essential to confer with me. Do not suppose that I have the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, or that these godly men and women associated with me can tell you any other Gospel than this. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

Again, he revealed that "*the sinner and the Saviour are to come together, with none between*" which is the crux of what follows in this document.

WHO QUALIFIES AS AN ALTAR WORKER?³

An altar worker is one whom God has chosen to touch the personal lives of those who come forward in response to an invitation to come to God - for salvation or for God's answer to a need. The altar worker is

the channel through whom the Holy Spirit works. The Altar worker therefore has the responsibility to keep that channel open.

¹The Sword & The Trowel Magazine, (1865, pg. 7): <http://reformedflyswatter.blogspot.com/2010/06/spurgeon-and-altar-calls.html>

²The Altar Call, Fred Zaspel: <http://www.biblicalstudies.com/bstudy/contempry/altar.htm>

³Guide to the Altar Ministry: <http://agchurches.org/Sitefiles/Default/RSS/NPC/Guide%20to%20Altar%20Ministry.pdf>



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EXPERIENCES AND QUALIFICATIONS EXPECTED OF AN ALTAR WORKER

1. Clear evidence of salvation
2. Spirit-filled life, baptized and continually filled with the Holy Spirit
3. Readiness and sensitivity in the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit
4. Has a sense of calling to altar ministry
5. Has genuine concern for others
6. Has passion for helping and caring attitude for others
7. Committed to a strong prayer life
8. Has regular study of God's Word, fasting, and church attendance
9. Submission to God, the senior pastor, and other church leadership
10. Able to maintain confidentiality
11. Conveys a pleasant and professional appearance
12. Is a regular tithe payer
13. The default countenance of an altar worker is friendly, light, spirited, calm but full of faith

GOALS OF ALTAR WORK

1. Provide a welcoming, comfortable and secure atmosphere for the respondents
2. Seek to discover the person's need, with gentleness, tact, respect; never pushing for details
3. Minister to respondent through prayer; be specific in prayer with the needy individual, while displaying a sincere desire to intercede.

TECHNIQUES FOR ALTAR WORKERS

1. Focus on prayer, resisting the temptation to counsel; time is limited, and the needy person desires prayer; most likely, the altar worker is NOT a licensed counselor; If professional counseling is needed, the person can be referred to the pastor or other designated person/s for further guidance
2. Always pick-up any instructions given by the minister or service director
3. Be prepared to lead someone to Christ. Below are four components of evangelism:
 - a. Admit: Confessing our sinfulness is the first step in conversion.
 - b. Repent: Repentance involves renouncing and turning from the sins of the past to live a new life in Christ.
 - c. Believe: Recognizing Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world is at the foundation of Christianity.
 - d. Receive: The new believer is born again upon receiving Christ as Lord and Leader of his or her life.
4. Be prepared to pray with those who seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Emphasize that this experience is a gift of power from God and available to all believers.
5. Be prepared to pray with those in need of physical healing. Encourage the person's faith by affirming the power and goodness of God.
6. Be prepared to pray with those in need of emotional healing. Emphasize that divine healing doesn't just apply to the body; God can also do the miraculous in our minds.
7. Be yielded to God for the operation in the gifts of the Holy Spirit



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FOLLOW UP

Your ministry at the altar extends beyond the church service.

1. Take information for a follow up visit.
2. Work in coordination with the designated person.
3. Make person aware of the discipleship program of the church

CONCERNING OPERATION IN SPIRITUAL GIFTS

I Cor. 1-11; I Cor 14:1-12

THE ALTAR WORKER CAN BE A BIG HINDERANCE TO SALVATION

Again, Spurgeon said, *“In the Gospel, the sinner and the Saviour are to come together, with none between.”* How then must the altar workers comport themselves in ways that do not break the line of communication between the seeker and the Savior? It’s important to note that a study of human nature should be added in this training because of the confluence of several socio-spiritual events.

The altar worker is most likely one who stays before the Lord and has stored-up zeal for anyone who approaches the altar. That zeal can be a huge hindrance to the seeker who may be turned off by the workers aggressive behavior. In the social sciences, there is a term called countertransference which is defined as follows:

“Countertransference:⁴ which occurs when a therapist transfers emotions to a person in therapy, is often a reaction to transference, a phenomenon in which the person in treatment redirects feelings for others onto the therapist.”

In other words, the worker can become more emotionally invested in the seeker’s salvation than he/she and thus might destroy the potential bond between the seeker and the Lord. What follows is a few of the many ways to avoid hindering the salvation connection:

1. Determining Factors for Personal Space⁵

“The comfortable space between you and someone you know well will probably be much smaller than it would be if you barely knew the other person. With a stranger, it is even greater. Other factors that determine a comfortable personal space:”

- a. Male to male
 - b. Female to female
 - c. Male to female
2. General Rules of Personal Space:
- a. Never touch anyone you don’t know
 - b. Stand away from a person unless you know him or her well

⁴Countertransference definition: <http://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/countertransference>

⁵Etiquette Rules of Defining Personal Space: <http://etiquette.about.com/od/Manners/a/Etiquette-Rules-What-Is-Personal-Space.htm>



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3. Governing Instruments Statement on Personal Contact

a. On page 9⁶ of the Church of God by Faith *Governing Instruments*, the following standard must be strictly adhered to: Avoid “*unwelcome or inappropriate physical contact.*” This policy does not stop at the altar and must be adhered to all the more. It is unwise for a zealous male altar worker to invade the personal space of a female seeker by placing his hands on her in any way. It is customary to anoint one’s head with oil but anything else is fraught with peril. Male workers should avoid holding a woman (even if she’s emotional) and which hinder her connection to Christ.

b. Likewise, female workers should be extremely careful when trying to cover a woman who is dressed inappropriately. One of the fastest ways to break the seekers Christ-connection is to start wrapping coverings around her--which could anger or frustrate her. Other methods to cover her are much less intrusive and should cause the least disruption:

3.b.i. Have two or three women stand in a semi-circle behind her to shield her from the audience

3.b.ii. Have a female altar worker hold a covering behind her without touching her

3.b.iii. Be prepared to lay the covering over her if she falls

4. Try to Avoid Giving a Newly Saved Person the Microphone

As mentioned in the discussion of countertransference, workers can be so overjoyed about the delivered that they want to hear about it on the spot. That places an unfair burden on an already emotional person to address the waiting congregation. That’s a tremendous amount of pressure- even for seasoned Christians and workers should resist the urge to have the newly saved do so. That is not to say that the person shouldn’t share their testimony at some other more appropriate time.

At the district and national level, no one in the Church of God by Faith should ever give the microphone to anyone around the altar because one cannot predict nor control what the individual might say. Thus, a new believer’s testimony could destroy all the good will of the service

Finally, it is within the spirit of thoughtfulness that altar workers should perform in this most important ministry. Their footprint should be light; always preferring more of Him and less of them. Space is important; touch is to be avoided. Service order must be sustained at all times; even when under the move of the Holy Ghost. Altar workers should be trained and prepared for whatever occurs in this most emotional time. Those who have other agendas or use this as an opportunity to shine should consider other ministries.

⁶Church of God by Faith *Governing Instruments* (2015): *Defining Sexual Misconduct*