



Ushers' Handbook

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Ushers Handbook

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Note: As Abundant Harvest Church grows these guidelines are subject to change.

Introduction

As an usher at Abundant Harvest Church, you will have the opportunity to impact people's lives by working hand in hand with the pastor or speaker. Ushers are important members of our church ministry team, and their responsibilities demand wholehearted attention and faithfulness. Not everyone can fulfill the call of an usher.

The primary purposes of an usher are to protect the anointing and to protect the people. Always follow the head usher's instructions. If you have any questions, ask the head usher.

An usher's performance can make or break the outcome of the service. Ushers set the spiritual climate of the service both by pre-service prayer and by presenting a joyful attitude. They make visitors feel welcome and comfortable and make sure everything is in proper order so the service will flow without interruption.

The Usher's Motto

Teachability, Thoughtfulness, Tactfulness, Timeliness and Teamwork.

Supporting Scriptures

Through love serve one another. Galatians 5:13

Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. 1 Corinthians 4:2

Usher Responsibilities

Usher

An usher's assignment and position are issued by the head usher. Ushers responsibilities include:

1. You are to maintain constant surveillance. Don't get so personally involved during the service that you are distracted from your responsibilities.
2. Greet visitors and those with whom you come in contact with the same warmth and love as the Pastor would himself.
3. During offerings, pass the offering bags in a cheerful manner. After collection, follow the head usher's procedures for securing the offering. Do not set down the offering bags for even a second.
4. Arrive 30 minutes before the beginning of the service.
5. The Usher Corps will help the ministry staff set the spiritual atmosphere by having a time of prayer together before each service. Always remember, "The atmosphere of expectancy is the breeding ground for miracles."
6. It is important that the usher stays in his or her assigned position. Even though you think you are helping, overlap creates confusion. Conversely, if not assigned to a position, be ready to serve if asked to replace someone else.
7. Only *females* will place and remove modesty cloths on women.
8. Special needs individuals should be asked if they need help; if they decline, stay nearby to ensure their safety.
9. In the event an individual comes in late and there are no seats available in the back of the sanctuary, an usher should escort them to any available seats. Do not allow people to argue over seating.
10. Your mission is to preserve godly order and protect the weak, needy, and infirm. Be sensitive, but do not be intimidated.

Control Usher

The control usher is selected by the head usher and must be trustworthy, faithful, able to exercise authority, and self-confident in their ability to perform many tasks. The primary responsibility of the control usher is to carry out the instructions of the head usher. The control usher is second in charge and takes command when the head usher is absent.

All of the duties of the usher and many of those of the head usher also apply to the control usher in their specific area of responsibility.

Head Usher

The head usher must be a motivator of people and earn the respect of the entire usher corps. The head usher must be a dedicated servant of the Lord and must be loving, kind, compassionate, dependable, dedicated, and authoritative. He or she must be able to discern others' attitudes, be consistent in decision making, and wise in counsel. As the administrator of the ushers, it is important that he continually seek God's guidance when making decisions.

In addition to the usher duties listed above, the head usher has the following responsibilities as leader of the usher corps:

1. Receive instructions from the pastor.
2. Delegate individuals within the corps to carry out those instructions, assigning responsibilities at the beginning of each shift.
3. Lead the ushers on duty in a brief pre-service prayer.
4. Teach and train ushers how to fulfill their delegated responsibilities.
5. Show appreciation to those under their charge often and in various ways.
6. Keep open communication with all members of the usher corps.
7. The head usher, or, in his absence, the control usher, should stand at the sound room door and monitor who comes and in out during the entire service and also check the hallways and office section for wanderers. Suspicious people should be confronted to determine if they are a threat; if they are not, direct them to the sanctuary.
8. Don't overwork ushers. Have a rotating schedule to prevent burnout.
9. Develop and maintain a watertight system of removing offerings from the sanctuary. Don't allow the ushers to set down the offering bags for even a second.
10. Deal with all disturbances prayerfully, firmly, and quickly with the least amount of disturbance possible. If the situation is beyond your control, see the senior pastor or administrative pastor, whichever is available.
11. Develop a system for taking attendance that is invisible and non-distracting.
12. Develop and instruct ushers how overflow seating will be handled.

Chain of Command

It is important that ushers respect the established chain of command, which is designed for the proper flow of information, the accomplishment of duties, and the delegation of responsibilities. When you have questions about your duties, go to the person who is immediately above your position in the chain of command:

Usher → Control Usher → Head Usher → Governing Elder → Administrative Pastor → Senior Pastor

Attendance

Ushers are expected to be present when scheduled. If an usher cannot fulfill their commitment, they should notify the head usher as soon as possible. A no call, no show without notification—or habitual tardiness—may result in being removed from the monthly schedule.

Dress Code

As one of the first persons to make an impression on our visitors, ushers are required to abide by the following dress code when scheduled to serve. An usher not meeting these guidelines will **not** be permitted to serve in that service.

1. Must be well groomed, neat, and clean, and dressed non-provocatively.
2. Attire should be nice, neat, and casual.
3. Shorts and jeans are allowed but should be in very good condition, not faded, and with no holes or strings.
4. Only *Christian* T-shirts are permitted, and they should be in very good condition, not severely wrinkled, torn, or faded.
5. Body piercing will be permitted, provided it is tasteful, modest, and relatively inconspicuous. Appropriateness will be determined by the Coordinator on a case-by-case basis.
6. Men are not permitted to wear tank tops or sweat pants.
7. Women should be tastefully dressed. No miniskirts, tank tops, sweatpants, or revealing shirts should be worn. Skirts should be at or below the knees.
8. Fresh breath is important. A breath mint is acceptable; chewing gum, however, is not because it can annoy some people.
9. Go lightly on perfume or cologne, as some people are allergic.

Altar Call Procedures

During an altar call, ushers are responsible for directing the flow of individuals as well as catching those who fall and helping them up off of the floor. During a move of the Spirit, ushers must be alert and keep their attention focused on the pastor and the head or control usher. At the same time, ushers should be sensitive to the Spirit and be continuously praying in the Spirit under their breath.

Catching

Catching is very important from both a safety and a liability standpoint. A person who is injured in a fall may have legal grounds to sue the church.

1. Due to the repetitive, strenuous nature of catching, only *men* will serve as catchers.
2. The usher is not actually catching the person; he is simply breaking the fall. Do not try to carry a person's weight to the floor. Let the individual lay backward as you support the head and the small of the back, not allowing the person's head to hit the floor. Two ushers should catch larger persons.
3. Once the person is safely on the floor, the usher should "leapfrog" to the other side of his neighboring catcher so that he can be ready to catch the next person. The leapfrog maneuver should be used as much as possible.
4. It is of great importance that the catcher does not physically touch the person being prayed for until they begin to fall unless the pastor instructs otherwise. The anointing is tangible, and we as ushers don't want to draw the anointing to ourselves and away from the person being prayed for. For this reason it is also important that we don't make physical contact with the pastor.
5. When a woman wearing a dress falls under the power of the Spirit, an appointed woman should place and remove a modesty cloth. Male ushers are *never* to do this.

Flow

1. Ushers are responsible for regulating the flow of people through the healing line. If too many people are crammed in the front, it is impossible for the catchers and the pastor to have room enough to operate.
2. The catcher will work in conjunction with the control usher concerning adding people to the front line. When setting up the healing line, keep enough room in front of the people for the pastor to move freely and behind the people for them to be laid down backward.
3. It is important for the usher to maintain eye contact with the one who is instructing him to release more people or hold them.
4. The flow usher should be direct, but not overly forceful or rude.

Pick Up

1. The usher should be sensitive to when to pick a person up and move them on, making room for new people to be placed in the line.
2. If there is plenty of room on the ministry line, do not rush the person. However, at times there will not be enough room to allow the person to remain. It is important that the spot they are taking be filled with one who has not yet been placed in the healing line.
3. When helping someone who has gone down under the power of the Holy Spirit, the usher should stand facing the person, not in back of them. Grasp the person's right hand with your right hand, place your foot at the bottom of the person's foot., then lift gently, pulling steadily toward yourself. Ushers should not put their hands around a person or under their arms unless it is someone who is crippled or needs personal assistance.
4. When assisting an obese individual, ushers should not attempt to *pull*, as they may find themselves injured or embarrassed.

Disturbances

Disturbances by mentally ill, demonically-controlled, or distraught persons require discernment on the part of the head usher or control usher. These persons may need to be removed from the sanctuary. First remove the disturbance from the sanctuary, and then deal with it in the meet and greet area.

A mentally ill or demonically-controlled person may exhibit rhythmic rocking, rolling eyes, irrational movements, and constant mumbling or talking to oneself. Such people are extremely unstable and should be handled without delay. Contact the head usher and agree in prayer immediately for God's power to manifest itself. Then ask the person to leave. If the person refuses, notify the governing elder, administrative pastor, or senior pastor, whichever is available, for further direction.

An individual distraught with grief, etc., who is making an inappropriate disturbance should tactfully and lovingly be asked to step outside the sanctuary and be escorted, along with an altar minister, to the prayer room. For instance, you may tell the person, "We have someone to pray with you. Please come with me."

Support of Children's Ministries

As a safety precaution, children's ministry workers have been instructed to summon an usher at any time when their duties require them to leave the room and only one adult is with the children (rest room breaks, for instance). The usher is to simply wait at the room entrance and observe until the worker returns. Should an emergency situation

arise while the usher is observing, the usher should summon the child's parents by giving the child's badge number to the computer operator and then follow the procedures outlined in the section *Medical Emergency in Children's Ministries*

Emergency Procedures

In the event of any emergency, the safety of church members is every usher's first responsibility. Ushers should maintain order to the best of their ability and, in the event of an evacuation, be the last ones out of the building.

Medical Emergencies

Taking quick action and following established emergency procedures can mean the difference between life and death. In the event of a medical emergency, the head or control usher is the one directing the crisis. Follow these guidelines:

1. Always assign one person to call 911. Assignments are to be made at the beginning of each shift.
2. Station one or more persons (an usher, if available, or another responsible person) outside the building to direct ambulance personnel to the location of the stricken person.
3. Keep one usher with the afflicted person at all times. Pray for the person's recovery in faith and don't allow a crowd to cluster around the person.
4. When the service is in progress, remove the person from the sanctuary if possible.
5. Assign one person to stay with family or friends.
6. Ushers need to know the identity of all people in the congregation with medical training.

Medical Emergency in Children's Ministries

Children's Ministry workers have been instructed to summon an usher in the event of a medical emergency. The usher will immediately take control of the situation.

1. If necessary, and children's workers have not already done so, call 911.
2. The usher will escort the parents to the child, request assistance from medically-trained members in attendance, and inform the Coordinator of the emergency.
3. Allow the teacher and doer to carry out their assigned responsibilities, providing assistance only if needed. The teacher is responsible for staying with the injured/stricken child at all times and for insuring that there is no crowding around the child. The doer is responsible for the other children. In the event of a major emergency, it may be necessary for the other children to be returned to their parents.

4. Wait in the parking lot for the ambulance and guide the rescue personnel into the proper room.
5. After the emergency is over, the usher, coordinator, teacher and doer will fill out the incident report together. Parents will be informed of the whole situation and given a copy of incident report.
6. **IMPORTANT!** The coordinator must list on the incident report all actions taken by our volunteers and staff members as well as how much time elapsed between each step of the emergency. The incident report must be signed by the coordinator, teacher, and doer involved in the incident. It is very important that these guidelines are followed so that we are, first of all, taking appropriate care of our children and, second, documenting our actions for any future investigation.

Fire

1. Always assign one person to call 911. When in doubt, call. The longer the delay, the greater the risk.
2. Verbally direct the crowd away from the fire to the nearest exit and outside to safety. Have everyone gather at the crosses until all are accounted for.
3. Immediately start verifying that the building is evacuated and that all persons are accounted for, checking all accessible rooms.
4. If the fire is small, assign ushers to attempt to put it out with fire extinguishers. All ushers are responsible to know the location of every extinguisher in the building. *Do not, however, put your personal safety or that of other ushers at risk.* If the fire grows too large or aggressive to extinguish or contain, exit the building immediately.