

“Do’s” and “Don’ts” of Altar Work

Some Do’s

- **Have a time of prayer** for the altar service before the church service begins.
- **Be clean and neat** in personal appearance and be careful of personal body odors. Something to sweeten the breath is recommended.
- **Always bring a Bible** (or New Testament) and a pen or pencil.
- **Make use of the Bible.** Allow the seeker to read God’s promises himself, if possible.
- **Work with your own gender.**
- **Be trustworthy**—a person that seekers can confide in. Do not betray their confidence. (Proverbs 11:13: “A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.”)
- **Be cautious** when you lay hands on seekers.
- **Touch them** (shoulder, back, arms, head). You lay hands on the seeker for the purpose of transmitting faith.
- **Be sensitive, inoffensive, and empathetic** (feel what they feel).
- **Be perceptive.** Observe what they are saying and what they are doing. Look for both positive and negative signs.
- **Be positive** in all your comments. It is good to tell the seeker often that they are doing well. They are usually in unfamiliar territory and your positive comments will set their mind at ease.
- **Encourage them to press on.** Many times, a seeker will get the Holy Ghost on the second or third attempt. Answer any questions they might have. Give your opinion as to what is hindering them from breaking through to the Holy Ghost. Then encourage the seeker to pray again.
- **Pray out loud with them.** When the seeker hears you pray, and even speak in tongues, it helps them to know how to worship as well as how to yield to the Holy Spirit.
- **Try to put the seeker at ease immediately.** The altar worker should not interrupt the seeker when he or she is praying! At an opportune moment, the altar worker should get the seeker’s name so that it can be used in conversation. “*What do you need from the Lord?*” is an appropriate question to ask the seeker.
- **Avoid unnecessary doctrinal discussion.** Show the person how his need can be met through his relationship to Christ. Keep the explanation simple and brief.
- **Encourage the seeker to make a decision for Christ** and have prayer with him.
- **See that the seeker stands on the Word of God for assurance**—not on feelings alone. *Facts* lead to *faith*, and *faith* brings *feelings*.

Some Don’ts

- **Hit or slap a seeker** on the back, arms, shoulders, or anywhere else. Control your emotions while you are working with seekers.
- **Shake the seeker.** It is very important that you keep your attention on assisting the seeker. You are not there to get a blessing yourself and forget about helping them.
- **Yell in the seeker’s ear.** Altar services can get very loud. Get close to the seeker’s ear and ask in a low voice, “Can you hear me?” If they are having trouble hearing you, you can turn up the volume a little at a time until they do hear your instructions clearly.
- **Mess up their hair or clothing.** Though many try, we cannot shake the Holy Ghost into a person.
- **Put words in their mouth** to get them to speak in tongues. Never tell a seeker to repeat after you or to say something (i.e. “la-la-la”, etc...).
- **Get in their face** (remember infectious diseases).