

CHURCH CLERK

A MINISTRY DESCRIPTION FOR LOCAL CHURCH LEADERS

Introduction

God asks the church to be a community of people sharing a common purpose and fellowship, continually growing in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God. It is "his body, the fullness of him who filleth everything in every way" (Eph. 1:22).

God calls us into His body for the purpose of establishing us in a saving relationship with Him and bring us into community with one another. The Holy Spirit convicts our minds, leads us to repentance, and plants us within the church.

You experience the presence of Jesus Christ in the world within your church; the world experiences the living presence of Jesus Christ as it witnesses your church. When a local church serves the world it is an expression of the love of Christ to the world. It is the body of Christ serving the world's needs and being used by the Spirit as an agency of salvation. Thus the church is a servant body. Created for service, it serves the Lord in praise, serves one another in love, and serves the world in humility. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

Our priesthood is to each other within the church and to the world. The clerk, like every other church officer, is a ministering servant of God. Every Christian believer is called to ministry, gifted by the Holy Spirit, and in baptism ordained for ministry (Eph. 4:11-12).

Duties of the Church Clerk

Although the role varies somewhat from church to church, the ministry to which a person is called when he or she becomes a church clerk involves the following:

1. *Secretary church board and business meetings.* Although a church secretary sometimes is delegated this responsibility, it is the duty of the clerk to see that this task is performed and properly entered in the church records. The official copy of the minutes should include complete copies of all reports, documents and financial statements. It is a public record which any church member or denominational representative can look at.
2. *Church membership.* There must always be a vote by the church, not just the church board, to add or drop a name from the church membership roll, except in the case of the death of a member. The clerk handles the correspondence between the individuals seeking transfers and the churches with which the transfer is being made. The clerk also fills out a certificate and report forms when a person is baptized or makes a profession of faith. In cooperation with the Sabbath School teachers, you should take a keen interest in keeping track of each member, making note of those who do not attend regularly and those who are absent. When a member moves away, the church clerk should try to keep in touch with them and promptly contact the pastor in the new district to have him visit them and encourage them to transfer to a new church home.
3. *Church records.* All church records, minutes of business meetings and board meetings, the church officer list, and the list of church members are maintained by the church clerk. This information is not only for the sake of the church family but portions of this information are also sent on special forms to the local conference office for its use in statistical reports. Also, it is vital that you supply copies of these records to new pastors and church board members so they have the information needed for their work.
4. *List of committees.* The clerk should make note of any committees that are appointed and give the chairman of the group a list of the members making up the committee, along with an outline of the work the committee is being asked to accomplish.

5. *Church directory.* It is the responsibility of the clerk to have a church directory produced as needed. This may be printed, photocopied, or produced for the church by one of the companies that makes photo directories. It should include non-member spouses and unbaptized children from church-related households, as well as regular attendees not yet baptized. It is well to include a statement that "this is not an official membership list." Its purpose is to facilitate friendship in the congregation.
6. *Church bulletin.* If there is no church secretary, the responsibility for the church bulletin may belong to the church clerk. This is a duty that can be delegated to another person if it is more convenient to do so.

Resource Materials

The following resources are recommended for your ministry. You can purchase these by calling *AdventSource* (800-328-0525), the Adventist Book Center (800-765-6955) or your local Christian bookstore.

A Manual for the Local Church Clerk or Statistical Secretary is a 40-page user-friendly booklet filled with helpful suggestions, forms, and explanations for keeping accurate membership records in your church.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual outlines very specific procedures for the transferring of members and the keeping of records. It is an essential resource for clerks.

Visit *AdventSource* On-Line at www.adventsource.org for a complete list of the latest resources available for local church leaders. You can place an order or request a catalog by calling 1-800-328-0525.

For information about additional resources and answers to your questions call the Adventist Plusline at 1-800-732-7587 or visit them on-line at www.plusline.org.