Communion Guidelines (Draft)

Ordained Pastors, Elders and Deacons in good standing and recognized by the leadership of NDCBF are eligible and qualified to serve communion to the local body of believers during designated Sunday services as well as other special programs as requested. Likewise, these same individuals are qualified to serve members of the body of Christ in community settings such as homes, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, etc. upon request. Teams of 2 are recommended (but not required) when going into community settings, especially personal homes. Men should be advised to be accompanied by another individual (preferably your wife or another female if single) when going to serve communion to a female.

NDCBF has designated first Service each Sunday as well as both services on first Sunday as the official regularly scheduled time of communion for its’ local body of believers.

The Deacon Executive Committee will ensure that a quarterly communion schedule of teams designated to serve communion for each regularly scheduled Sunday service is made available and distributed to qualified individuals. Other communion coverage needs can be arranged by contacting the Deacon Executive Committee in advance.

If your team is assigned to serve and you have a conflict or will not be able to serve, it is your responsibility (not your team leader’s) to find a replacement. It is not acceptable to just not show up and leave your team short-handed. Please make appropriate arrangements for coverage if you cannot serve on your designated Sunday and communicate your arrangements to your team leader.

There will be 2 teams assigned to cover each communion service during Sunday service.

Each communion team will have a team-leader assigned for the quarter. The team leaders of the 2 teams serving for any particular service is responsible for reminding and reiterating the instructions below which apply to all members serving communion:

All team members are to report to the mezzanine level lobby area 30 minutes prior to the start of service. If after 15 minutes prior to the start of service you have not checked in with your team leader to get your assignment, your assignment is subject to be given to someone else who is dressed and willing to serve as it is imperative that we have coverage and not wait until the last minute wondering if a team member is going to show up. Please be understanding if you are late and yield to the one who is available, on time and ready to serve;

All team members should know their assignment station and the number of trays they will need to obtain. Diagrams of the sanctuary are available in the drawers of the table tops against the wall on the mezzanine level. Ideally a minimum of 12 members per team (24 total) are needed to cover the two element tables, 7 sections of the sanctuary seating, the cry room, the AVL booth, the ushers on the floors and the choir. Most teams have pre-assignment listings.

On first Sunday only, in addition to the minimum of 12 per team in the sanctuary, 2 additional team members (1 from each team) will need to be available to assist in the youth area as well as 2 (1 from each team) for the children area.

Note: the musicians on stage are not to be served the elements as they will be playing during communion and have made other arrangements for communion. Furthermore the stage camera staff and the back center section camera staff should be given their elements prior to the start of service making it unnecessary for them to handle trays during communion.

All team members are to be dressed in proper attire: solid black suit, solid black tie, black shoes and socks, solid white shirt, clean white gloves and white pocket-chief and NDCBF ID badge.

A prayer of consecration and preparation should be offered up no later than 5 minutes prior to the start of service (8:25am or 11:10am) and all team members should thereafter immediately proceed to their staging area (the east or west sanctuary lobby doors or the children or youth areas) and await the cue from the usher or the individual giving leadership to the communion service;

While waiting in the lobby, please be mindful of the flow of services on the monitors. We ask that you especially acknowledge with reverence and silence the prayers that are being offered up in the sanctuary even as you remain in the lobby;

After the welcome of all visitors and guest from the presiding Pastor, the praise team or choir will typically sing 1 or 2 songs during praise and worship. During the last song, a lead usher will communicate to the communion teams to enter the sanctuary and stand to the side in the entryway;

The cue to move to the designated areas along the wall in the sanctuary will be when at the end of the last song, the Pastor presiding over communion begins to approach the podium;

All team members are reminded and aware that resting/standing position is with left hand over right;

The Pastor presiding over communion will pray a blessing over the elements when all movement has stopped and both teams are still and resting/standing against wall;

Immediately at the close of the prayer, all team members will take their tray(s) from the team leader at the table and go and serve the assigned station/section. Each team member is part of a pair sending and receiving trays across the row. Do not pass a tray until you see there is someone on the team at the opposite end ready to receive the tray; Use non-verbal visual communication to the other part of your pair to pass trays simultaneously down alternating rows. Team members serving the center back, very last row where the camera staff is sitting should usher the tray to come back to you as the camera staff would like to not have to handle the tray and abandon the camera;

When your assigned section has been served, again using non-visual cues, confirm to the other half of your pair and agree your section is complete and proceed back to your designated table and return your tray(s). As you proceed back, don’t delay, but observe to see if a congregant or a serving team member is trying to get your attention to get additional or a replacement element for any reason;

When you return your tray, remove an element for yourself, go and line up again along the wall (no particular order), remove your gloves, begin loosening the wrap on your element cup/wafer and await the cue to move to your position across the front of the stage on the floor;

The 2 team members covering the table will confirm all their respective team members are off the floor, all trays returned and covered. When complete, the table team members will provide a visual cue indicating they are finished and the table team members will join the back of the respective team line;

The cue to begin moving across to the front of the stage for all team members (especially the one at the front of the line) is to notice when the team member attending to the table on the opposite side of the church begins to move into the back of the line; When that occurs the front lead member and all members behind will begin moving across the front of stage to line up. The front lead member should go all the way to the side of the podium but do not cross it nor stand in front of it. There is usually a sound monitor on both sides of the podium on the floor of the stage. Stand right in front of the monitor. All serving team members will face the congregation (again left hand over right);

 The team members serving the choir on stage will not serve the Pastor presiding over communion until the two teams have begun making their way across the front of the stage on the floor; The Pastor’s element should be partially opened for him by the team member serving the stage such that the Pastor does not have to fumble with the wrapper during communion. The partially opened element should be served to the Pastor using the small silver tray that is on the alter table.

All team members are to be aware that the element representing the body/bread is administered first and should be offered up and consumed from the left hand; and the element representing the blood/grape juice should be offered up and consumed from the right hand as per the desired protocol for uniformity as set by the NDCBF Deacon ministry.

All team members will follow the lead of the Pastor consuming the elements on cue. The Pastor will close the communion ordinance either with a prayer or a statement indicating “and after they done this they went forth singing a hymn”. After either of these cues is complete each team will turn back out and exit along the side walls and receive trays from the team member over the table and return trays to the kitchen. After the last communion service of the day, the table cloths need to be removed from the table and returned to the ladies in the kitchen as well.

The team member serving the stage should also take the used element from the Pastor prior to moving the altar table back behind the stage curtain.