

How to run a church service

Each organisation will develop their own style of service, although most have similar elements. Outlined is general information that may be useful if you want to review how you run your service, or to set up a new service.

Timing and frequency

Most organisations hold their service on a Sunday. However, a Spiritualist service can occur on any day or evening of the week. The timing and frequency of a service depends on the requirements of the organisation. Some centres or churches schedule weekly services, others hold them fortnightly or monthly. Some have morning services, others afternoon or evening services.

Length and content

Traditionally, services have been 60 minutes in length, structured around a 15-minute address and 25 minutes of clairvoyance, with 20 minutes allowed for introductions, opening and closing prayers, songs or hymns, a reading, and notices. In recent years some organisations have included a meditation and spiritual healing within their service. To accommodate the extra activity, they either extend the length of the service or ask mediums to give a shorter address.

Aim and atmosphere

The aim of the service is to impart spiritual philosophy by means of an address, and proof of life after death through mediumship messages from those who have passed over. It is important that the energy of the service is uplifting and welcoming, that those who are attending feel relaxed and at home, and that there is an opportunity for attendees, particularly those new to this philosophy, to ask questions after the service.

Creating rosters

It is a good policy to set up a roster at least six months in advance that outlines who will be chairing your service, your mediums, the person doing the reading, the person doing the meditation if you decide to include one, and who will be giving spiritual healing. People are busy and if they are not booked in advance, you may not be able to secure them at short notice.

Many organisations also confirm that everyone who is part of the service are available a week before the service date. In addition, you may choose to have a roster for your door person, supper duty and music person. Some organisations leave spaces for new mediums, or visiting mediums, to step in during the year. As an organisation you can choose whether a medium arranges swaps with other mediums if they are unavailable, or whether it is done through someone on your committee.

What to include in your service

The order of service is flexible and can be adjusted to suit your organisation. It will generally include the following elements.

Welcome and introductions (chairperson)

- The chairperson welcomes everyone and often includes a request for attendees to turn off their cell phones.
- At this stage some organisations ask attendees to introduce themselves to those sitting beside them, in front of them and behind them. This is a good way for people to get to know each other. It can also help to raise the vibration of the service.
- The chairperson introduces all those who are helping with the service, e.g., the medium, reader, door person, the person in charge of the music and themselves.
- Many organisations also include advice for attendees to only take on board what feels right and to just let go anything that does not fit. This is important as the Spiritualist philosophy enables everyone to hold their own beliefs and to change those beliefs at any time.

Opening prayer (usually given by the medium)

- This is either channelled from spirit or from the person themselves.
- It may start with asking people to go into the healing silence for a few minutes, for healing to be sent to all those in need.

Song

Reading (member of the congregation)

- This is organised in advance to be given by a member of the congregation.
- It is generally a spiritually uplifting reading from a book, that lasts about three minutes.

Song

Address (medium)

- This will either be channelled directly from spirit or will be the medium's own words.
- The length of the address is generally between 10 and 20 minutes and will be uplifting, informative and given on a love vibration. This part of the service often focuses on an aspect of spiritual philosophy to help people understand how they can live their life in a spiritual manner.

Song

Many organisations use this time to collect a free will offering from those attending and, if this is the case, the song is usually sung sitting down.

Clairvoyance (medium)

- In this part of the service the medium will ask to go to individual members of the congregation and give them messages from spirit. The medium should always give the person they are going to the opportunity to say that they don't wish to receive a message.
- Messages are uplifting and do not include any personal information that could embarrass the person. If the medium is receiving that type of information, it is important that they ask to talk to the person privately afterwards.
- The message will often include description/evidence of the spirit and a short message that will help the person receiving it.
- At the end of the clairvoyance, the chairperson thanks the medium and advises that the medium will be available after the service to talk with those who received messages.

Notices and closure (chairperson)

- The chairperson reads out any notices (about the next service, upcoming events, membership subs, etc), thanks all those who helped with the service and also the congregation for attending, and invites everyone to stay for some light refreshments and discussion.
- If healing is offered after the service, the chairperson explains that healing is available and how to access it.

Closing prayer (usually the medium)

- This is either channelled from spirit or from the person themselves.

Closing song

- Some congregations stand in a circle and join hands for this.

Music

Some services don't include music. Those with music generally pre-record it either on to a memory stick or through a cell phone. Song books are distributed amongst those attending, or songs are displayed on an electronic screen.

After the service

By providing light refreshments at the end of your service, you give the medium the opportunity to talk further with anyone who received a message during the service.

It also provides an opportunity for members of your committee to circulate among those who have stayed, generally getting to know people and answering any questions that people may have.

Many organisations have their own library of spiritual books available for the congregation to browse through at the end of the service and make them available for financial members to borrow.

Some organisations offer spiritual healing after the service.

Spiritual Healing

Spiritual healing may be provided during or after the service:

- this may include a healing meditation either by the medium or a member of the organisation

- some organisations have their healers stand around the outside of the congregation, sharing healing while the meditation is happening or music is played
- other organisations invite those wishing to receive healing to move to different chairs with the healers standing behind them and sharing the healing while the meditation is happening, or music is played.

The roles and expectations of those involved

Chairperson's role and responsibilities

The chairperson's role is particularly important as they bring the service together and maintain momentum during the service.

Generally, it is the chairperson's responsibility to:

- ensure the room is set up appropriately, including providing water and song books for themselves and the medium
- fill in the order of service which is a sheet detailing the various people who will be taking part, the songs, any notices, etc.
- select songs and check that music is available
- check that the person rostered for the reading is present and has an appropriate reading with them (it can be helpful to have some readings available in case a last-minute substitute is needed)
- check that healers are available
- welcome the medium when they arrive, talk through the order of service, and check that they are happy to talk with people after the service
- facilitate the smooth running and continuity of the service by adding in small comments, introducing the different elements, and thanking everyone at the end
- ensure a thank you card, petrol voucher or anything else offered to visiting mediums is made available either before or after the service.

Expectations of mediums

It is reasonable to have certain expectations of the mediums working at your service. They could be expected to:

- arrive well before the service starts, dressed appropriately, and tuned to work with spirit
- on arrival, make themselves familiar with your order of service and your expectations of them
- talk with you before the service starts, if they are wanting to work differently from your usual procedure
- deliver clear, uplifting messages
- not pass on personal information in a public setting.

The role of spiritual healing

Spiritual healing may be the basis of your organisation or form a part of it. Most organisations have a person who is responsible for training and looking after their healers and ensuring that safe practices are maintained at all times.

Spiritual healing can be offered as part of any services that are held and in these cases the healing is often offered to the entire body of attendees. Individual healing can also be offered either before or after the service.

Many organisations also have a session during the week where members of the public are offered individual spiritual healing either seated in a chair or lying on a massage table. Generally, up to four healers will be giving healing if the recipient is on the massage table.

More information regarding spiritual healing can be found on our website.

The absent healing register

An absent healing register is a book held by your organisation where anyone can add in the name of a person in need of spiritual healing.

There is often a column for more information about why the healing is needed and it is optional as to whether this column is completed. The book is placed in an accessible place at any time that services or other activities are being held.

Absent healing is then sent to all those in the book individually by the spiritual healers within the organisation, as part of their healing practice. Those in the book will also be included in any healing sessions that are held by the organisation. Some organisations include those in the absent healing register at the start of their service when they go into the healing silence, as part of their opening prayer.



Church Services

How to train to become a registered spiritual healer

Training to become a registered spiritual healer can be obtained either through a Spiritualist Church or by means of a trainer with Spiritualism New Zealand.

Spiritualism New Zealand administers a two-year course for those wishing to become registered spiritual healers. By becoming registered, and while you are involved in the training, you are automatically covered by our Public Liability Insurance and, on graduating, gain the recognition of being registered by a national organisation. Full information regarding this process is available on the spiritual healing page on our website.