

Canon (Church) Law E 2 Of sidespeople or assistants to the churchwardens

1. The sidespeople of the parish shall be appointed by the annual parochial church meeting or, if need arises between annual parochial church meetings, by the parochial church council.
2. No person whose name is not on the church electoral roll is eligible as a sidesperson, but all persons whose names are on the roll are so eligible.
3. It shall be the duty of the sidespeople to promote the cause of true religion in the parish and to assist the churchwardens in the discharge of their duties in maintaining order and decency in the church and churchyard, especially during the time of divine service.

www.cofe.anglican.org/about/churchlawlegis/canons/complete.pdf

The role of sidespeople

Sidespeople are often the first people you meet as you come in. Although part of their role is to welcome people to the service their main function might seem to be to give out the right books, service sheets and papers!

In practice sidespeople do much more than give out papers. They are responsible under the direction of the Churchwardens for making sure that all the practical jobs in preparation for worship are done and that everything goes smoothly during the service.

They may be involved in setting out furniture. They may take the collection and deal with it after the service. They may also count carefully so that we know exactly how many people under and over 16 are in each service. The Church of England loves statistics and so do we. It is very helpful to look back in the service register where numbers of those attending and receiving communion are recorded and see how many people we might expect on any given Sunday. This is especially important at festival times, not only the major times of the church's year such as Easter and Christmas but at times when we have our own major events and services.

Sidespeople are the smiling, helpful and welcoming face of the church. They are among the first to arrive for a service so that they can prepare the church to greet you and they are generally among the last to leave, after making sure that everything is correctly put away and the building is left tidily and safely for the next people to come in. Although they may have their own favourite service, we rather hope that they'll be willing to take a turn at any of the services from time to time as needed.

We are always looking for more sidespeople so please do think about whether this is a role you would like to take.

CarolynFox