

The Altar

In Pentecostal churches, "the altar" typically refers to the front area of the church sanctuary, often near the pulpit, where people come forward for prayer, repentance, dedication, or receiving the Holy Spirit. It is considered a sacred space where individuals have personal encounters with God.

Common Uses of "The Altar" in Pentecostal Tradition

1. **Salvation & Repentance** – People may come to the altar to accept Christ as their Savior or to recommit their lives to Him.
2. **Prayer & Intercession** – Believers gather at the altar for personal or corporate prayer, seeking God's guidance, healing, or strength.
3. **Baptism in the Holy Spirit** – Many Pentecostals believe in a distinct experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit, often evidenced by speaking in tongues, which may happen at the altar.
4. **Healing & Deliverance** – Ministers may lay hands on individuals at the altar for physical healing, spiritual breakthrough, or deliverance from struggles.
5. **Consecration & Dedication** – Some come to the altar to surrender their lives, dedicate their ministry, or seek God's direction.

While Pentecostals do not view the altar as a literal sacrificial place (like in the Old Testament), they see it as a spiritual meeting place where God moves powerfully in response to faith. Many churches have "altar calls," where people are invited forward at the end of a service to respond to the message.

Incorporating Altar time with Celebrate Seniors

For **Celebrate Seniors**, incorporating altar time could be a powerful way to invite seniors into a deeper encounter with God. Since many of them may have grown up in church traditions that emphasized the altar as a place of prayer and commitment, this could resonate deeply with them.

1. **A Gentle "Altar Call" Moment** – After the devotional, invite those who feel led to come forward (or remain in their seats) for prayer. Some may want to rededicate their lives, seek healing, or simply experience God's presence.
2. **Laying Hands on Those in Need** – If comfortable, gently lay hands on those who request prayer (or have others do so). Many seniors carry burdens—physical pain, loneliness, or grief—and a time of intercession can be powerful.
3. **Group Prayer at the Altar** (or a Dedicated Area) – If mobility is an issue, designate a space where a few can gather to pray together. Alternatively, invite seniors to raise their hands for prayer if they prefer to stay seated.
4. **A Time of Worship & Reflection** – Play or sing a simple, familiar hymn as people reflect and pray. Soft music can create an atmosphere of reverence and openness to God's presence.
5. **Encouraging Testimonies** – Allow a time for seniors to share what God is doing in their lives, especially if they've experienced healing, peace, or an answer to prayer after seeking God at the altar.

Since many seniors have spent decades walking with the Lord, this could be a deeply meaningful part of **Celebrate Seniors**—a time when they feel God ministering to them personally. Would this fit with the flow of your gatherings?

May *'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.'* Numbers 6:24-26

Blessings and thank you for all you do,

Frank.

References

Adapted from: Alvarado, J. E. (2012). Worship in the Spirit: Pentecostal perspectives on liturgical theology and praxis. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, 21(1), 135–151. <https://doi.org/10.1163/17455251-02101010>

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