

Open Kitchen

HOMELESS MEALS WAITER'S GUIDE

1. Introduction

- a) We seek to have three helpers at each meal, in addition to the three cooks.
- b) The main objective of a helper is to make the guests feel welcome and to serve them.
- c) The meals are served at St Joseph's Church, 36 Cookham Road, Maidenhead, SL6 7EG.
- d) Ideally, try to arrive at 6:00pm. Don't worry if you want to be earlier or need to be later.
- e) Feel free to use common sense to help out wherever you feel it will be useful.

2. Before the guests arrive:

- a) Lay the tables with cutlery, cups, serviettes, water, salt and pepper.
- b) Help lay out clothes and toiletries to make it easy for the guests to find things.

3. When the guests arrive

- a) Guests are asked to arrive any time after 6:30pm , but some come earlier.
- b) Meet and greet guests as they arrive. Homeless people face quite a lot of prejudice from the general public and are usually treated as if they do not exist. Normal social greetings, such as introducing yourself to them, asking their names and looking at them normally when you talk to them is a great part of a personal warmth that we can share with them.
- c) Offer the guests tea/coffee. Ask them how they like their drink, then fetch it for them and bring it back to them. Usually, there will be people in the kitchen who can get the drinks for you.

4. Serving food

- a) When food is served, ask guests if they want to eat. They usually want to know what the food is. If they want food, fetch it for them but make sure the kitchen knows if there are any special request and make sure the request was met (such as a small portion or no cheese).
- b) Be careful to avoid over-asking if a guest says no to a request.
- c) Sit with the guests and chat with them whilst they are eating. If you are happy to eat, eat with the guests. It is another part of the human warmth we offer. You can happily break off to serve other guests if needed and go back to eat when you are ready.
- d) When guests have finished a course, take the dishes to the kitchen.
- e) After the end of the meal, many guests like tea/coffee. They tend to leave 10-15 minutes after they finish their meal.

5. When the guests have left

- a) Guests leave anywhere between 7:45-8:30pm. If there are any guests still there, we need to let them know we have to clear up.

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- b) Clear the tables
- c) Hoover the floor
- d) Help the finish off in the kitchen.

6. Questions

We much prefer you to get in touch that worry about something that might be easy to resolve.

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Thank you for volunteering. It makes a huge difference to the people who come for our food and company.