

Protocol

1. Definition

The Oxford Dictionary defines “Protocol” as “the official procedures or system of rules governing affairs of state or diplomatic occasions”, or “the accepted code of procedure or behavior in a particular situation”

Simplify stated for the purpose of this lecture, protocol relates to the courtesies which should be afforded to religious, government and civic leaders.

2. Biblical Authority

NIV Romans 13:7 “Give everyone what you owe him. If you owe taxes, pay taxes, if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour”

NIV 1 Peter 2: 13-17 “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority, instituted among men: whether to the king as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honour the king”

NIV 1 Timothy 5:17 “The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching”

3. Official Authority For National Symbols and Protocol

Prior to our nation’s Independence, the Government established a Ministry of Home Affairs which had responsibility for National Security, Immigration, Elections, National Symbols, Protocol and other matters.

National Symbols included the national anthem, flag, crest, national motto and the pledge of allegiance. National competitions were organized for submissions for each symbol, which were then scrutinized and evaluated within the Ministry of Home Affairs according to specific guidelines and submitted to Cabinet for approval.. Except for the national anthem, all of the submissions were further refined and altered. Following Cabinet approval the national symbols were then

submitted to the College of Arms in London for final approval and registration. The College of Arms is attached to the Palace and is not administered by the British Government. All British Commonwealth countries upon attaining independence followed the same procedure, as well as many other countries. The greatest difficulty which we faced with the College of Arms was getting them to accept the aquamarine color of our flag instead of royal blue, and the palm ponds on the crest. Cabinet gave final approval of the national symbols following submission to the College of Arms, after which relevant legislation was approved by Parliament which also governs the use of the national symbols.

4. Branches of Government

The Constitution

The Bahamas is a Parliamentary Democracy, with a monarch represented by the Governor General as titular head, with three branches of Government:

- (i) The Executive headed by the Prime minister, with an official leader of H. M. Loyal opposition
- (ii) The Judiciary headed by the Chief Justice
- (iii) The Parliament headed by the Speaker of the House of Assembly with a President of the Senate

5. Protocol & Order of Precedence

The Bahamas protocol and order of Precedence are based with adaptation on that of the United Kingdom and other regional Commonwealth countries

6. Display of Flags in Church

The National Flag should stand on the right of the platform and the Christian flag and or Baptist flag should stand on the left of the platform

7. Seating and Speaking in Church Service

1. Only clergy and church officials should be seated on the platform
2. Only clergy should speak from the pulpit
3. Officials and lay persons should speak from a side lectern & be escorted to And from the pulpit
4. Governor General, Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers, Leader of Opposition, former Governors General, former Prime Ministers, Chief Justice and Speaker of House Assembly should be received and escorted by Pastor on arrival & departure or other designated church minister.

5. Church should stand on arrival and departure of Governor General & Prime Minister or when they speak.
6. Seating of officials should be according to order of Precedence.

8. Titles Afforded Government Officials

Queen – Her Majesty/Your Majesty
 Governor General – Her Excellency, The Most Honorable Dame Marguerite Pindling
 Prime Minister – Honorable
 Cabinet Ministers – Honourable
 Chief Justice – Honourable Chief Justice
 Leader of Opposition – Mr.
 President of Court of Appeal – Honourable
 President of Senate – Honourable
 Speaker of House Assembly – Honourable
 Former Governors General – Most Honourable
 Former Prime Ministers – Right Honourable
 Members of Senate – Honourable
 Members of Parliament – Mr. if not Cabinet Minister
 Former Cabinet Ministers with more than two terms in Parliament - Honourable
 Judges – Honourable

9. National Honours Systems

Bahamian – Highest Honour National Hero
 Most Honourable
 British – Highest Honour
 Knighthood – Sir, Dame
 Privy Councilor (Right Honorable)

10. Order in Addressing Church Organizations

1. Church Meetings

Pastor, Ministers, Officers and Members, Visitors

2. District Meetings

President District & Your Officers
 President Emeritus
 Presidents of Departments & Officers
 Superintendent Bahamas Baptist Union and Officers

Superintendent Emeritus
Presidents of Departments of Union & Officers
Host Pastor
Pastors, Ministers, Brothers & Sisters, Visitors

3. Union Meetings

Superintendent & Officers of The Union
Superintendent Emeritus
District Presidents & Officers
President Bahamas Christian Council
President Bahamas National Baptist Missionary & Educational Convention &
Officers
Presidents of Departments of Union & Officers
Presidents Emeriti of Departments of Union
Host Pastor
Pastors, Ministers, (delegates), Brother & Sisters, Visitors
If senior Officials are present, you address them after you have addressed
the religious leaders

11. Official Meetings, State and Official Funerals

Near the beginning of service, the moderator or the Pastor sets the protocol as he acknowledges presence of officials and clergy present in order of precedence. The programme should then flow without introductions and no need for speakers to repeat the "protocol" or order of precedence. Congregation remains in their places during departure of dignitaries, participating clergy and bereaved families, and congregation departs in order as directed, or as seated starting from front of church.