



Protocol: It's a Matter of Courtesy

From the GFWC Leadership Committee

Protocol is defined as “a code prescribing strict adherence to correct etiquette and precedence” as in diplomatic exchange and military services. Protocol is merely a matter of simple courtesy and honoring those who serve as officers or chairmen. It prescribes etiquette to establish the order of introductions, presentations, and more. It's clear from attending many district, state, and region meetings, while the meetings were handled differently, courtesy was never lacking. GFWC leaders use common sense in extending good manners and courtesy in dealing with others.

As local, district, state, regional, and national leaders who preside over meetings, details included are really suggestions to help make your meetings run more smoothly while making your honored guests feel special. Remember, this is your meeting and you may do things a little differently from what is suggested. Do what works for you and your members.

Now let's talk about some specifics that will you and keep you on the right track.

- **Invitations to Meetings:** Invite state officers and chairmen to your meetings. It is good for state officers and chairmen and it is great for your members to meet the clubwomen who work so diligently to lead our state and district Federations. It inspires members and builds enthusiasm plus they get the important information from the top! It is very essential to put the invitation in writing: email, text, or traditional written form. Do this early! In your invitation give the date, time, location, purpose of the meeting, and what you would like for the guest to do such as speak on a particular subject, install officers, initiate new members, etc., and appropriate clothing for the event. Give the address of the meeting place and simple directions. If you do not hear back shortly, follow up with a phone call. As a courtesy, offer to pay mileage if you can afford to do so. A small gift is also a nice thought.
- As a **courtesy and respect** for the office, the audience should rise to greet the GFWC State President and at a Junior meeting, the audience rises for the GFWC State Director of Junior Clubs. Members do not have to rise each time, just when introduced or presented for the first time of the event. If these leaders are known by all attending, the guest is “presented” not “introduced”. After the event is successfully over, write a thank you note expressing your appreciation. Although it could be done in an email, it is most appropriate to write a note of appreciation and place it in the mail.

The main thing to remember about protocol is the Golden Rule: “Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.” Remember these are guests in “your house.” Always appoint someone to be the hostess of the guest. This

assigned hostess should never leave the guest unattended and should help with luggage and/or materials upon arrival and to get to and from the meeting.

What are the keys to a successful, well-run, protocol-correct meeting? Be mindful of planning ahead, good organization, a well-prepared agenda, excellent communications skills, and good members to help accomplish all tasks.