

ELDERS MEET WITH REGULAR PIONEERS, SPECIAL PIONEERS, AND FIELD MISSIONARIES

PROGRAM FOR DECEMBER 2015 THROUGH JANUARY 2016

Note to the elders:

This meeting is to be conducted in December or January by two elders selected by the body of elders. Other elders may attend. The meeting should be positive, practical, and encouraging. Allow those in attendance to comment freely on the questions posed. Supplemental questions may be used as needed and as time allows

Theme: Listen and Learn From the Illustration of the Sower (Lu 8:5-15)

“THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD” (5 min.)

In one of his Kingdom illustrations, Jesus described a sower who casts seed. This illustration has a profound impact on the way we go about our ministry [**Read Luke 8:5-15**]

In the illustration, what do the sower, the soil, and the seed represent? (w08 7/15 12-14 ¶4-9)

The sower represents those who proclaim the good news

The soil represents the differing heart conditions of the people to whom we preach

The seed is the word of God

Therefore, the Bible is our primary tool in the ministry

SPREAD KINGDOM SEED EFFECTIVELY (16 min.)

In Bible times, a sower would scatter seeds by using long sweeping motions

Pioneers also do their best to spread the Kingdom seed all around their territories

Jehovah exhorts us to become effective in spreading his Word [**Read 2 Timothy 2:15**]

Question: What factors make it challenging to share a Bible verse with those in our territory?

Pioneers can create opportunities to read directly from the Bible by using introductions that quickly feature a specific verse

[Review a few suggestions from the August 15, 2014, *Watchtower*, pages 11-15, and encourage the pioneers to make application of this material in their ministry]

At the recent annual meeting, it was announced that the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines will be published on a bimonthly basis and that we will only feature one of these magazines per month

It is not necessary to place literature with every person we talk to

If a householder shows minimal interest, perhaps only a tract should be left

Although the Bible is our primary tool in the ministry, there are other tools in our teaching toolbox that all Christians should learn to use skillfully to teach people the truth (Pr 22:29; km 7/15 3)

The *Good News* brochure is one of our main tools for starting Bible studies. In the *Good News* brochure found on jw.org, the lessons “Who Is God?” and “Is the Good News Really From God?” feature associated videos

The primary tool we have for teaching Bible truths is the *Bible Teach* (or *Teach Us*) book

After completing a study of the *Bible Teach* (or *Teach Us*) book, we use the “*God’s Love*” book to teach the student to apply Bible principles in everyday life

A tool for directing students to the organization is the *Jehovah’s Will* brochure

Videos, such as *Why Study the Bible?*, *What Happens at a Bible Study?*, and *What Happens at a Kingdom Hall?*, are also tools that we should learn to use well

Just as a craftsman wants to use each tool properly, pioneers will want to ‘handle the word of the truth aright’ by making good use of all our tools for the ministry (2Ti 2:15)

THE SEED IS ALIVE AND EXERTS POWER (16 min.)

God put in Moses' hand the means by which he could prove that his message was from Jehovah (*w14 8/15 11-13 ¶1-7*) **[Read Exodus 4:2-5]**

With that proof of God's authority in his hand, Moses could go forth and confidently represent the true God before his own people and before Pharaoh (Ex 4:29-31; 7:8-13)

Jehovah has put in our hand his living written Word, with which we can prove that our message is credible and is from him **[Read Hebrews 4:12]**

The Bible's message is more powerful in reaching the heart of another person than anything we might say (Isa 46:10; 55:11)

In August 2008, *The Watchtower* began to feature a series called "The Bible Changes Lives" [Briefly cite a recent experience or two from this series]

Question: How can reading and meditating on these real-life accounts affect your ministry?

Understanding the power that God's living Word can exert in people's lives motivates us to improve our teaching techniques (1Co 9:23)

THE SEED IS AT WORK IN YOU (20 min.)

As we spread Kingdom seed to others, God's Word affects their hearts as well as ours (Lu 8:15; Mr 4:8) **[Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13]**

Pioneering strengthens our relationship with Jehovah in many ways (*w13 9/15 27-31*)

Seeing the spiritually destitute condition of those to whom we preach deepens our appreciation for the truth (Isa 65:13)

Observing Bible students improve their lives by applying Bible principles deepens our appreciation for God's wisdom (Isa 48:17, 18)

Working alongside good associates in the ministry builds us up spiritually (Pr 13:20)

Pioneering with our marriage mate strengthens the threefold marital cord (Ec 4:12)

Our trust in Jehovah increases as we put Kingdom interests first, experience Jehovah's support, and see him answer our prayers (Mt 6:30-34)

Staying fully involved in our ministry helps us when assignments change or when our circumstances in life take an unexpected turn

Philip the evangelizer is a good example of one who demonstrated a positive attitude and full reliance on Jehovah through changing circumstances in life

Philip was in Jerusalem as one of the certified men appointed by the governing body (Ac 6:5)

When Christ's followers were scattered because of persecution, Philip went to Samaria, working in close cooperation with the first-century governing body (Ac 8:4, 5, 14-17)

Thereafter, some 20 years after Philip's initial preaching in Samaria, the apostle Paul and his traveling companions were making their way to Jerusalem at the end of Paul's third missionary journey **[Read Acts 21:8, 9]**

Evidently circumstances had changed again; Philip was now settled in his Caesarean preaching territory and was a family man

Yet, he was still known for his zeal, and he taught his family to love and serve Jehovah (*bt 53, box*)

Question: How has pioneering assisted you through changing circumstances in your life?

Full reliance on and confidence in Jehovah as well as a positive attitude keep us active in spreading Kingdom seed through changing circumstances **[Read Psalm 37:5]**

YOU DO NOT KNOW WHICH SEED WILL GROW (3 min.)

[Read Ecclesiastes 11:6]

Even if a sower does not see a lot of increase as a result of his work, it does not necessarily mean that he has been less diligent or faithful than others

To a large extent, results depend on the heart condition of the hearer

The important thing is to keep spreading the Kingdom seed in your territory and not to let your hand rest

Such efforts show your full support for the faithful anointed remnant who “have the work of bearing witness concerning Jesus” (Re 6:9; 12:17; 19:10)