

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

PROGRAM FOR DECEMBER 2017 THROUGH JANUARY 2018

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. Encourage pioneers to appreciate the value of being good examples. The meeting should be positive, practical, and encouraging

Theme: Continue to Be “an Example to the Faithful Ones” (1Ti 4:12b)

THE POWER OF A GOOD EXAMPLE (3 min.)

Paul recognized the power of a good example [**Read 1 Timothy 4:12**]

You are a blessing to the congregation not just because of the amount of time you spend in the ministry but also because of your good example

[Warmly commend the pioneers for their hard work and their efforts to strengthen the congregation]

Let us consider how you can continue to set a good example in the following three areas: (1) speaking and conduct, (2) assisting others in practical ways, and (3) not looking back to what you left behind

BECOME AN EXAMPLE IN SPEAKING AND CONDUCT (20 min.)

Recent assembly and convention programs have highlighted the need to cultivate godly qualities

Question: What do you remember from these important programs that can help us be an example to others?

It is essential that we all work hard to ‘clothe ourselves’ with godly qualities that resemble those of the Christ (Col 3:12-14)

This is not simply “character development” or being genteel—which would involve always appearing to be kind and good, speaking softly, avoiding any display of anger, reading the Scriptures daily (*ju* 172-173)

It takes “earnest effort” to cultivate godly qualities [**Read 2 Peter 1:5-7**]

Godly qualities come from deep down in our heart; they are not superficial

They motivate us to follow the Christ and pursue Kingdom interests

We must avoid engaging in conduct that would hinder God’s spirit and discourage others who observe our example

Conversation with fellow publishers in the ministry can easily turn to harmful “whispering” if we are not alert (2Co 12:20, *ftn.*)

We can ask ourselves: ‘What is my reputation? Am I known to steer away from harmful “whispering”? Do I extinguish negative comments?’ (*w11* 7/15 19, *box*)

Situation: A zealous pioneer sister has success in the ministry, places much literature, cultivates interest, and starts Bible studies. She enjoys relating the details of her success with other publishers. Some make sarcastic remarks about her

Questions: Why is self-control important in this situation? In what way can brotherly affection help us to change the tone of the conversation?

Be on guard against materialism as well as unwholesome or excessive entertainment (Php 4:8, 9)

These things will slow down spiritual progress and could result in our manifesting ungodly traits, which would spiritually blemish our example

Keep your spiritual vision fixed on pleasing Jehovah and doing your best in the pioneer ministry. In this way you will make a practice of doing what is righteous, chaste, and lovable (Pr 4:25-27)

Then, the “God of peace will be with you,” blessing you with his spirit and helping you to be an example to others

Being cooperative with the elders and following their lead will bring Jehovah’s blessing (Heb 13:17; *od* 148 ¶7)

It is the responsibility of the elders to take the lead in the field ministry. All of us can support this theocratic arrangement by demonstrating a cooperative spirit (*od* 20-21 ¶11)

When questions arise regarding field service arrangements or territory coverage, it is best to approach the service overseer. He and the body of elders will provide appropriate assistance

Godly qualities should be in evidence not only in the field ministry but also in how you treat your fellow pioneers and others in the congregation

Display these qualities not only to make your advancement manifest but to build up the congregation

“IRON SHARPENS IRON” (17 min.)

Pioneers should practice humility by learning from others [**Read Proverbs 27:17**]

As a piece of iron can be used to sharpen a blade made of the same metal, one friend may succeed in sharpening the intellectual and spiritual state of another (*w96* 3/15 3 ¶5)

Newly appointed pioneers should humbly seek assistance from those who are more experienced (*w97* 11/1 32 ¶2)

Older pioneers can humbly learn from the contagious zeal of younger ones

They can also benefit from young ones’ good technical skills in handling electronic devices

A good pioneer is always willing to learn from others and to share what he has found to be effective in the ministry

Questions: What are some practical ways in which pioneers can ‘sharpen’ one another so they can become more effective in the ministry? How have you been ‘sharpened’ by other pioneers over the years?

Pioneers can take the initiative in ‘sharpening’ publishers in the congregation and helping them to maintain joy in the ministry

Galatians 6:2 says to “go on carrying the burdens of one another”

Many publishers are in very challenging situations and have many responsibilities. As a result, they may not be as prepared for the ministry as they would like to be

Make it your goal to reach out to those who need assistance, and help them to enjoy the time they are able to spend in the ministry

Questions: What effect does sincere commendation for what a publisher is able to do in the ministry have on him? How might this make him more receptive to any suggestions you may offer? Why is it important to offer simple and practical suggestions in accord with the individual’s circumstances?

Offering a kind word or extending a warm invitation to work together with publishers in the ministry are loving gestures that can lighten a depressed one’s heavy load [**Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14**]

Questions: How does the congregation benefit from your example in encouraging the depressed and helping others in the ministry? What blessings have you received because of assisting others in the congregation?

LOOK FORWARD—DO NOT LOOK BEHIND! (18 min.)

The full-time ministry involves making personal sacrifices

Jesus indicated that we cannot allow ourselves the luxury of looking back to what we left behind (Lu 9:62; jy 155)

The apostle Paul took this counsel to heart [**Read Philippians 3:13**]

“Forgetting the things behind” does not mean that we erase them from our mind (w96 5/1 31 ¶1-4)

Paul evidently remembered the things he had sacrificed, since he had just listed them

But he did not constantly dwell on them or regret ‘missed opportunities.’ They were “as a lot of refuse” compared with his wonderful hope (Php 3:8; w05 3/15 20 ¶17-18)

Although we may still remember the things we left behind, we choose not to be overly concerned with them

Like a runner nearing the finish line, we need to ‘stretch forward,’ focused on what lies ahead

At best, any success in this world is temporary

Our reward will far exceed anything we may give up now—it is impossible to outgive Jehovah (Mt 19:29)

Situation: A brother who has pioneered for a number of years faces financial difficulties and becomes discouraged. He begins to wonder what his life could have been if he had pursued higher education and obtained a well-paying job

Question: How can meditating on his current and future blessings help him to regain his focus?

The Bible contains examples of others who did not look back

Abraham and Sarah left a life of comfort in Ur (Heb 11:8, 9)

If they kept remembering what they had given up, “they would have had opportunity to return” (Heb 11:13-15)

Moses originally left behind far more in Egypt than any other individual Israelite later did

There is no record of his longing for those things (Heb 11:26)

Their example encourages faithful ones living thousands of years later

Your joyful and self-sacrificing spirit can encourage others to take up the pioneer service

YOUR EXAMPLE WILL HAVE LASTING RESULTS (2 min.)

The apostle Paul exhorted Timothy to become an example in speaking and in conduct (1Ti 4:12)

May we put forth earnest effort to demonstrate godly qualities to the point that they are overflowing (2Pe 1:8)

Your good example in (1) speech and conduct, (2) assisting others in practical ways, and (3) not regretting the sacrifices you made to enter the full-time service brings blessings to you and to the congregation and brings honor to Jehovah

Never underestimate the effect your example can have on others!