

CIRCUIT OVERSEER MEETS WITH ELDERS AND MINISTERIAL SERVANTS PROGRAM FROM SEPTEMBER 2012 THROUGH FEBRUARY 2013

Note to the circuit overseer:

Warmly express appreciation for all that the appointed men are doing in caring for the needs of the congregation. Mention specific areas in which you have observed that the brothers are doing well. The tone of the meeting should be loving and positive (*tg* 21:11)

Theme: Teaching by Word and Example—A Rewarding and Weighty Assignment (Heb 13:7)

INTRODUCTION (3 min.)

Jehovah values men like you who are willing to expend yourselves in behalf of His sheep

The Governing Body, too, appreciates the self-sacrificing service rendered by elders and ministerial servants

Teaching in the congregation is a weighty responsibility (Jas 3:1)

Because an overseer stands before others instructing or leading them, both his words and his actions come under closer scrutiny before the congregation and Jehovah [Read Hebrews 13:7]

This is also a serious matter for ministerial servants, since your example affects your freeness of speech (1Ti 3:13)

We must convey wise direction and then set a zealous example in applying it ourselves so that our actions reinforce our words of counsel

We will examine our example in three areas: (1) manifesting zeal in the field ministry, (2) demonstrating appreciation for the meetings, and (3) promoting unity on the servant body

TAKE THE LEAD BY BEING *VISIBLE* AND *POSITIVE* IN THE MINISTRY (16 min.)

As those who are “taking the lead,” appointed men should be visible in the ministry

The congregation looks to elders and ministerial servants to set the example in the ministry, including the house-to-house work

Though public speaking has its place in declaring the good news, it is not a substitute for preaching from house-to-house (*w91* 1/15 11-13 pars. 6-12) [Read Acts 20:20]

Ask yourself: ‘Do I share the apostle Paul’s zeal for the house-to-house work? Do I have a meaningful share in this vital aspect of our ministry? How would my family or field service group characterize my attitude toward the house-to-house work?’

Situation: After meeting with the field service group, an appointed brother routinely shares only in the return visit and Bible study activity

Question: What effect could his example have on the activity of his field service group?

It is recognized that advancing age or poor health may limit the amount of time that one can spend in the door-to-door activity, but to the extent our circumstances allow, we should take the lead (Php 4:5)

If you are a group overseer and will not be present at the meeting for service, arrangements should always be made for someone to take the lead (Pr 21:5)

Question: What negative message is communicated to the field service group if there is no one to take the lead?

In addition to conducting the meeting for field service, the group overseer and his assistant should take an active interest in the spirituality of each person in the field service group

This would include taking note of who is missing during congregation meetings, seeking to determine the reason, and providing needed assistance in a loving and kind manner

They should also make an effort to share in the field service with each member of the group as circumstances permit

Our positive attitude toward the ministry encourages the evangelizing spirit in the congregation

Question: How can we demonstrate a positive attitude toward the ministry? [By keeping up-to-date with our preaching methods (such as by using recent suggestions found in *Our Kingdom Ministry*), by making skillful use of the Bible, by speaking positively of the pioneer activity] Our taking a visible lead and manifesting a positive spirit toward the field ministry will engender a positive, zealous spirit in the congregation

PROMOTE TRUE WORSHIP OF JEHOVAH BY WORD AND EXAMPLE (16 min.)

Assembling together on a regular basis is a requirement for pure worship (De 31:12; Ps 26:12; Heb 10:24, 25)

Our meetings allow us to listen and learn, to encourage others, and to be encouraged ourselves

The *primary* reason we gather together is to worship Jehovah and take our position on his side of the issue of sovereignty

Elders and ministerial servants should show by word and example that they take seriously their privilege to worship Jehovah at our places of worship

Question: How can this be done by our words? [Making positive comments about the meetings in our conversations with others; inviting interested ones as well as any inactive ones in the territory to attend congregation meetings]

Question: How can this be accomplished by our example? [Attending and participating at meetings each week; avoiding temptation to care for other duties during the meetings; setting a good example as a teacher when on the platform; carefully following instructions in *Our Kingdom Ministry* regarding assignments on the Service Meeting]

[Read Ezra 7:10 and Nehemiah 8:8]

Questions: How can appointed men today imitate Ezra, the priests, and the Levites when handling teaching parts on the meetings? What effect will this have on the congregation?

Make sure that Christian meetings are a source of comfort for all (*w10* 10/15 25 par. 17)

True worship must also be promoted on the family level

What is the purpose of the Family Worship evening?

To give families an opportunity to draw closer to Jehovah, to fortify their spirituality, and to strengthen their family bonds

Questions: How can appointed men set the example for their families in this area both by word and by example? How will the family benefit when the family head takes a fine lead?

Helpful suggestions for family worship can be found in our publications (*w11* 8/15 6-7; *km* 1/11 3-6)

As you set the example in promoting true worship, the congregation and your family members are certain to ‘imitate your faith’ (Heb 13:7)

PROMOTING UNITY BY WORD AND EXAMPLE (16 min.)

Unity is a requirement to have God’s holy spirit and to enjoy success in our spiritual endeavors

Peace is essential to unity and is an aspect of the spirit’s fruitage (Ga 5:22; Jas 3:17, 18)

Despite Gideon’s army being few in number, their unified efforts resulted in a grand victory (Jg 7:19-22)

In contrast, when fellow Israelites began finding fault with Gideon, the disunity that resulted brought tragedy to those who did not support Jehovah’s arrangements for salvation (Jg 8:4-9, 13-16)

Because we enjoy Christian unity, Jehovah is accomplishing a worldwide preaching work even though we are comparatively few in number

[Commend the brothers for something specific that you observed during the week of the visit that relates to their example in maintaining unity]

If appointed men are not at peace with one another, the congregation and its activity will suffer (Ga 5:15, 26; Jas 3:14-16)

What could cause disunity within the servant body?

Situation: An appointed man who has demonstrated a tendency to be contentious and uncooperative is recommended for deletion between visits of the circuit overseer or is not recommended for reappointment when moving to another congregation. When asked by the branch office, the elders state that the brother has been contentious for years, but they admit that he has never been counseled

Question: Why should elders not shy away from offering counsel when needed? How should we respond when we receive counsel?

Situation: An appointed man's wife or children have a disagreement with another member of the congregation

Question: How can the appointed man set an example that is worthy of imitation and that will promote unity? [By being willing to listen to all sides; by benefiting from the observations of other appointed men; by assisting his family members to apply appropriate Bible principles, such as Matthew 5:23-25; by not shielding family members from needed counsel or correction]

Peace and unity are promoted as we loyally support arrangements set in place by the Governing Body and the branch office (*w90* 10/1 30-31)

We will continue to enjoy spiritual prosperity and Jehovah's blessing if we work together in unity (Ps 133:1-3; Php 3:16, 17)

LOCAL NEEDS (6 min.)

CONCLUSION (1 min.)

It is a privilege and a weighty responsibility to be among those Jehovah is using to care for his people
You can be confident of success and Jehovah's rich blessing if you shoulder your responsibility to teach by word and example

[**At this point, the ministerial servants should be dismissed.** Thereafter, consider with the elders the following information and any other necessary matters needing attention]

KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH THEOCRATIC PROCEDURES (2 min.)

[Since the *Shepherding* textbook was released, the elders have been directed to make notations in various sections of the book. Please remind the elders that a list of such adjustments and notations can be obtained by making use of *Index to Letters for Bodies of Elders* (S-22), a copy of which can be obtained from the "Forms" section under the "Documents" tab of the jw.org Web site. This is also a valuable resource for new elders when they receive their copy of the *Shepherding* textbook]