

## CIRCUIT OVERSEER MEETS WITH ELDERS AND MINISTERIAL SERVANTS PROGRAM FOR MARCH 2017 THROUGH AUGUST 2017

### *Note to the circuit overseer:*

Present the outline in a warm, earnest manner. Help appointed men to see that in this final part of the last days, we must not become complacent with regard to our spirituality. All need to consider prayerfully the example they set in keeping Jehovah's day close in mind as well as manifesting strong faith and trust in Jehovah and his organization. Warmly commend the brothers for the efforts they are making to maintain their spirituality and that of their families. Not all cited texts need to be read or commented on, neither must every subpoint be discussed

Theme: Set a Proper Example, for "The Time Left Is Reduced" (1Co 7:29)

### **BE AN EXAMPLE OF SPIRITUAL ALERTNESS** (2 min.)

As Jehovah's day quickly draws near, spiritual alertness is an absolute necessity (Zep 1:14)

We must never become complacent in our worship or spirituality, but must rather "keep testing" and "proving" that we are progressing spiritually (2Co 13:5a)

Elders and ministerial servants have the responsibility to be an example to their families and the congregation in spiritual alertness and maturity [**Read 1 Peter 5:2, 3**]

What can help?

We will discuss the value of (1) being good students of the Bible, (2) helping our families to delight in God's Word, (3) having faith and trust in Jehovah and his organization, (4) balancing our secular activities with our theocratic activities, and (5) taking the lead in the ministry

### **FIND DELIGHT IN DEEP STUDY OF GOD'S WORD** (7 min.)

Appointed men need to cultivate an appetite for God's inspired Word [**Read Psalm 1:1-3**]

We "form a longing" for the Bible by reading it every day and researching points that we find difficult to understand (1Pe 2:2; *w13 4/15 7-8 ¶4-8*)

Read with an open mind, and pray for wisdom to discern important lessons

We can ask ourselves: "What does this tell me about Jehovah? How can I apply this information? How can I use it to help others?" (*w16.05 24-26 ¶7-13*)

One publisher stated: "I have been improving my personal study and Bible reading. Now I feel that my relationship with Jehovah is stronger. He is more real to me" (*w99 9/1 23-24 ¶15*)

Daily Bible reading promotes unity and helps appointed men to be humble and modest (De 17:19, 20; Ro 12:3, 10)

### **HELP YOUR FAMILY FIND DELIGHT IN GOD'S WORD** (12 min.)

The Family Worship evening provides an excellent opportunity to find delight in God's Word

Use this arrangement to take time for unhurried Bible discussion and study tailored to the needs of the family (*km 1/11 3 ¶3*)

**Question:** Why is it important to draw attention to the application of Bible principles during your Family Worship evening? How can this be accomplished?

**Answer:** Doing so will draw us closer to Jehovah, will strengthen our relationship with him, and will prepare us for future challenges. This can be accomplished by skillfully using Bible accounts to address the needs of each family member. For example, using the account of Noah, parents can teach teenagers that courage is needed to preach and that inappropriate entertainment—such as violent video games—is not acceptable to Jehovah. Little ones can be taught to be orderly and to tidy up their rooms. Parents can learn from Noah the value of taking care of their family responsibilities even though they may be tired and have much to do (*w13 4/1 12-13*)

We should not forget the purpose of the Family Worship evening

“The primary purpose of maintaining a Family Worship evening or a time for personal study is to draw closer to God. (Jas. 4:8) . . . Maintaining a regular Family Worship evening, then, is a key ingredient to help all the members of our family ‘keep ready’ spiritually as we await the foretold ‘great tribulation.’ (Matt. 24:21) It is vital to survival.” (w11 5/15 14 ¶14)

Help your family to “comprehend fully what is the breadth and length and height and depth” of God’s Word (Eph 3:18)

**[Read and discuss Proverbs 2:1-5]** Use research tools to enhance your family worship. This will increase your family’s knowledge of Jehovah and his purposes, and it will deepen their understanding of Bible truths (w14 11/15 17 ¶19)

The rewards of meeting this challenge are worth the effort!

One family head stated: “Family worship has been protecting my family, and it has been preparing my family for the difficulties we face”

### **BUILD FAITH AND TRUST IN JEHOVAH AND HIS ORGANIZATION (10 min.)**

During the great tribulation, appointed men will play a major role in helping God’s precious sheep to have confidence and avoid being unduly affected by the fear of man

Recall the video dramatization at the 2016 regional convention in the talk entitled “Pursue What Builds Loyalty—Faith,” depicting trials during the great tribulation. An elder read and discussed Psalm 27, which served to strengthen the confidence of the publishers in the basement

We do not know all the details of how events will unfold during the great tribulation, but we do know that appointed men will need to be examples of faith and loyalty

Our words of advice and encouragement should not be superficial but should impart spiritual sustenance and provide motivation to remain loyal in the face of future tests and trials

#### **[Read Micah 5:5]**

**Question:** What vital role will the “seven shepherds, yes, eight princes” fulfill in the near future when Jehovah’s people will come under attack? (w13 11/15 20 ¶16-17)

**Answer:** The elders will need to strengthen God’s loyal servants and use the Scriptures to reassure them that Jehovah will deliver his people (Mic 5:6)

Even now we must provide helpful Scriptural direction in Christian living

We must discipline our mind and heart to search for spiritual gems that can be shared with others (Pr 2:4, 5; w11 10/1 15 ¶6)

Be well-acquainted with letters and Scriptural direction provided to all bodies of elders

Prepare well for elders’ meetings by researching and prayerfully considering matters on the agenda that is provided in advance of the meeting by the coordinator of the body of elders (Pr 15:28; 21:5)

Set a good example for your family. Help them and others to build and maintain faith and trust in Jehovah and his organization (Zep 2:2, 3)

### **BALANCE SECULAR AND THEOCRATIC RESPONSIBILITIES (12 min.)**

It can be a real challenge to balance one’s theocratic responsibilities with secular responsibilities, especially in economically depressed areas (1Ti 5:8; 6:6-10)

Caring for all our responsibilities requires diligently applying Bible principles, knowing how to set priorities, and having good spiritual habits. Doing all these things produces a solid spiritual foundation (Ps 62:7, 8; Php 1:10; w84 5/15 8-11)

This also involves good cooperation among elders and ministerial servants, which includes *proper* and *effective* delegating (w09 6/15 28-31)

Delegating is Scriptural

Jehovah set the perfect example by training Jesus and delegating work to him (Joh 1:3)

Jesus imitated his Father by training and delegating (Mt 24:45-47; Lu 10:1; Ac 1:8)

First-century disciples imitated Jesus by training and delegating (Ac 6:3; 2Ti 2:2)

[Play video “Train, Trust, and Empower Others, as Jesus does,” presented at the 2015 convention (3 min.)]

**Questions:** How was this brother feeling with all his responsibilities, and have you ever felt this way? What helped this brother to see things in the proper perspective, and what did he do? What suggestions from this video do you think will help you to be balanced?

Keep in mind that proper and effective delegating can help a husband free up time to shepherd the one who needs him most—his wife (*w09* 5/15 19-20)

Setting the proper example in balancing our secular and theocratic responsibilities will help appointed men to maintain their spiritual focus and to remain spiritually awake by keeping Jehovah’s day close in mind. Others will be encouraged to do the same (Mt 24:44; 1Co 16:13)

### **TAKE THE LEAD IN THE MINISTRY BY PREACHING WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY** (10 min.)

Because “the time left is reduced,” it is important that we cultivate and strengthen our sense of urgency about preaching (1Co 7:29; *km* 10/14 3)

**Question:** What signs might indicate that we have lost our sense of urgency? (*w12* 3/15 16-17 ¶7-13)

**Answer:** Preoccupation with personal pursuits or with side issues, or a desire to enjoy more of what the world has to offer

In addition to taking the lead in the house-to-house work, promote and engage in other avenues of the ministry that allow us to reach interested ones when and where they can be found (Ac 20:20, 21)

Look for opportunities to witness informally

Having on hand tracts, contact cards, and so forth ensures that we are always ready to give a witness

Being Bible-study conscious will help us focus on making disciples (*km* 7/15 1)

When possible, appointed brothers should take the lead during midweek meetings for field service

Keep meetings for field service brief but informative. This requires thorough preparation. The service overseer should also have this in mind when making his visits to the service groups [Reiterate information found in the March 2015 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry*, pages 3-6]

**Questions:** What material could be considered during a meeting for field service? Why is it important to be on time for meetings for field service?

The congregation expects ministerial servants and elders to take the lead. Your visibility and example in the ministry directly affects the zeal of the publishers (*w13* 11/15 29 ¶14; *ks10* 3:4; *km* 4/10 2)

### **LOCAL NEEDS** (6 min.)

### **CONCLUSION** (1 min.)

In view of the urgency of the times, spiritual alertness is vital

[Briefly review the five areas covered in this outline]

Your willingness to serve as appointed men during these last days is greatly appreciated by Jehovah, the Governing Body, and the congregation

[**At this point, the ministerial servants should be dismissed.** Review with the elders the direction in the August 1, 2016, letter to all bodies of elders, paragraph 21, regarding their responsibility when an individual who has been accused of child sexual abuse moves to another congregation. Additionally, please review the direction in the *Shepherding* textbook, chapter 4, paragraph 20. Highlight that divorce and separation are *personal* decisions. (*w16.08* 16 ¶13) Thereafter, please review with the elders any matters needing attention. Be alert to provide the elders with practical direction that addresses one or two of the most significant local needs]