



# WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF BRITAIN

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TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

“Wanted 1,000 Preachers.” That striking request appeared in the April 1881 issue of *Zion’s Watch Tower*. Those who responded were called colporteurs, the forerunners of today’s pioneers. These full-time preachers have grown from a handful in the years following 1881 to a monthly average of over 858,000 during the 2004 service year. Devoted pioneers have made a huge contribution to the expansion of the preaching work over the years. Surely you will agree that they are an asset to any congregation. What can elders do to encourage and strengthen them?

**Appreciate their value:** We are motivated to safeguard something when we realize its high value. How would this hold true respecting pioneers? The word “pioneer” originally referred to a military engineer, one who preceded the main army and built roads, bridges, and trenches. Hence, a “pioneer” came to mean one who prepares the way or takes the lead, forging ahead in the face of odds or opposition. Pioneers in Jehovah’s organization build figurative roads and bridges, both in the territory and in the congregation. In some regions pioneers literally go ahead of other publishers, preaching in remote, seldom-worked territory, at times even learning a foreign language. In most areas pioneers help congregations cover their territory thoroughly. Their skill and graciousness in the ministry break down barriers and build rapport. (Ps. 45:1; Col. 4:6) The many hours pioneers spend in the territory leaving literature with interested persons and cultivating the interest—in effect, planting and watering seeds of truth—can only lead to a more productive territory.—1 Cor. 3:6.

Pioneers also build up the congregation by working with others in various features of the ministry. They may be asked to participate in the Pioneers Assist Others programme or simply to help a newer or less experienced one in the ministry. At times, pioneers are called upon by the elders to study with and help reactivate a publisher. (1 Thess. 5:14) Their zealous and faithful attitudes build up the pioneer spirit in the congregation. (Phil. 2:20-22) Their dress, grooming, and speech are a stabilizing force. In these and other ways, pioneers contribute much to a healthy spiritual condition. And not to be overlooked is the fact that their example contributes to the growth and progress of the congregation.

**Build them up:** Every pioneer wants to be successful and to ‘fully accomplish his ministry.’ (2 Tim. 4:5) Many are seasoned self-starters who have made pioneering their career. Others are new or young with power and energy in abundance. Usually all that these need to move forward are a few words of support spoken at the right time.—Prov. 25:11.

Asking tactful questions shows pioneers that we are interested in their work. For example, you might ask, “What encouraging experiences did you have?” Each month Congregation Book Study overseers have an opportunity to review the field service reports of the pioneers in their groups. If a pioneer’s hours fall far short of the goal, you might ask, “How is

your schedule working out?” Many, if not all, pioneers are affected by the soaring cost of fuel. How are the pioneers in your congregation coping? In what practical ways can you assist them? Could you offer to drive your car when working with them in the field ministry? The visits of the service overseer provide an opportunity for him and the book study overseer to review the activity of the pioneer. Whether the trend is positive or negative, you might ask, “Are you enjoying your pioneering?” Your interest reassures the pioneer that his work is important and enables you to learn of any difficulties he is encountering.

What if you learn that a pioneer is experiencing difficulty? Build him up with “spiritual words” that fit his need. (1 Cor. 2:13) Listed below are helpful articles that address some common challenges.

- Major illness or unforeseen problems—*km* 7/98 p. 5
- Poor scheduling; lack of self-discipline—*w*91 5/15 pp. 29-30; *g*91 9/8 pp. 23-5
- Distraction by material pursuits—*w*96 5/15 p. 31
- Discouragement because of apathetic territory—*w*97 9/15 pp. 23-4; *w*88 7/15 p. 19
- Lack of ministry skills—*km* 1/02 pp. 3-6; 3/97 pp. 3-6
- Need for a balanced ministry—*w*91 7/1 p. 30; *w*89 5/15 p. 22

Elders may find it advantageous to keep a folder of articles about pioneering and how to cope with the difficulties pioneers encounter. Use these articles to build pioneers up and to impart what is favourable as the need may be.—Eph. 4:29.

All of you have many responsibilities. We commend you for carrying these out in a diligent manner. We also commend you for your personal example as evangelizers and your efforts to promote the pioneer spirit in your congregation. It is our hope that the comments in this letter have highlighted how valuable pioneers are to the congregation. They truly deserve our commendation and support. Be alert to encourage them regularly. When you see trends that indicate that a pioneer may be struggling or losing his joy, suggest or even personally review with him appropriate articles and Scriptural encouragement. Congregation Book Study overseers and the service overseer should especially provide needed assistance.

Just as an army moves on the roads and bridges built ahead of it, so too a congregation’s ministry greatly benefits from the work of its pioneers. Help them to be joyful and productive! This strengthens the entire congregation and enables you to render a fine account for those entrusted to your care. (Heb. 13:17) May Jehovah God bless the spirit you show.—Phil. 4:23.

Your brothers,

*Watch Tower B. & J. Society*  
OF BRITAIN