

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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March 5, 2007

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Memorial Preparations

Dear Brothers:

Each year, the Lord's Evening Meal gives us the opportunity to reflect on how the ransom covers our sins. At such a time, we are able to meditate on our own conduct and faith as we strive to live in harmony with God's will. It is therefore important that preparations made for the Memorial be done in a way that will be respectful, dignified and help those in attendance pay close attention to the information presented. In this way, all present can reflect on how the death of God's Son affects them personally. How can your preparations accomplish this?

Selecting the speaker: The speaker for the Memorial should not be selected on a rotation basis as if all the elders should have their turn at giving a Memorial talk. Choose only the best speakers for this assignment. Those presenting the talk should prepare well. It has been observed that many Memorial speakers go overtime. Going overtime when giving this important talk however would demonstrate a lack of consideration. It would be good to remember that there are many new ones who are attending our meetings for the first time. In addition, there may be those from another congregation who are waiting to use the Kingdom Hall after your Memorial is finished. Memorial speakers should note that the entire talk is 45 minutes long. This period includes the prayers offered for the bread and wine as well as the time needed to pass the emblems to all present. Therefore, consideration must be given to the size of the audience and the time needed for the emblems to be passed to all present. The speaker should stick closely to the time periods listed on the outline for each section of his talk.

The chairman should start the meeting on time, even though some may have not yet arrived. After the talk is concluded, the chairman should not review the main points of the talk but introduce the final song and prayer to conclude. Congregation elders will want to be sure that all arrangements for the Memorial have been carefully made well in advance. Brothers having assignments and responsibilities should arrive at the hall well before the Memorial is to start. If available, select elders or ministerial servants to pass the emblems. Have a sufficient number of brothers prepared to do this so that the passing of the emblems will not be prolonged unnecessarily. After the servers have served those in the audience, the servers will sit down in the front row and the speaker will serve them. Finally, one of them will serve the speaker.—*km 3/89*, page 1.

Preparing the Kingdom Hall: The body of elders should ensure that the Kingdom Hall is thoroughly cleaned for the Memorial. If repairs or painting is needed, this should be done well in advance of the Memorial date. As mentioned in the March 2004 *Our Kingdom Ministry*, any decorations made to the hall should be modest and not take away from the dignity of the event. It would not be appropriate for example to hang flowers, lights, balloons and strands of colored paper around the windows or from the ceiling. It would also not be appropriate to hang such things from the table displaying the emblems or the speakers' stand. We would never want our Kingdom Halls to resemble the elaborately decorated churches of Christendom at Easter and Christmas time. This would not be showing due respect and would distract from the information presented on this important evening.

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The bodies of elders should coordinate their preparations when more than one congregation plan to use the hall, so that volunteers from the different congregations cooperate and work together. Once the hall is cleaned and the stage is arranged, the second congregation using the hall would not need to redecorate the platform when they enter into the hall for their Memorial.

When preparing the hall, there is no need to replace the year text with another text that has been specially prepared for the Memorial. In addition, it would not be necessary to design and print special Memorial programs, listing the names of the speaker and order of events. After the Memorial is over, the emblems may be taken home. However, the bread or the wine should not be consumed after the Lord's Evening Meal at the Kingdom Hall in front of others, as has happened in some congregations. The principle "let all things take place decently and by arrangement" is especially appropriate for the Memorial of Christ's death.—1 Cor. 14:40; w60 4/1 223-4.

The Emblems: The table should be covered with a clean plain cloth. There is no need to cover the bread and wine. Since we want all in the audience to clearly see the emblems, it is recommended not to place flowers or anything else on the same table where the emblems are displayed. A section of unleavened bread can be put on each plate used and the wine can be poured into the cups before the meeting begins. (w76 2/1 75) As an example of how the emblems on the table should appear before the talk begins, please see the pictures in the following references: *Watchtower*, April 1, 2001, page 32; March 15, 1993, page 7.

Encourage All to Show Respect For the Memorial: In the past, we have received counsel about organizing "Memorial parties" right after the meeting ends. While this does not rule out families or publishers associating together after the Memorial, it certainly rules out organizing social gatherings featuring alcohol, dancing and merrymaking on Memorial night. Clearly, such parties would not show respect to Jehovah and to his Son who gave his life for our sins. We want to commend you brothers for following this counsel. Our conduct on the Memorial night and thereafter should certainly reflect the great respect and appreciation we have for the occasion and for the death of God's Son in our behalf.—Compare 1 Corinthians 11:20-22.

The counsel found in the March 1, 1969, *Watchtower*, page 160, is appropriate. There it says: "Often, after arriving home from this meeting, a family of Jehovah's witnesses will spend time discussing the meaning of the Memorial. This relaxing consideration of the celebration and the Bible accounts of its institution can have a fine effect in bringing to a close the significant and happy evening." How could anyone after the Memorial reflect on Jehovah's grand activities while at the same time eating and drinking heavily amid loud music? The February 1, 1976, *Watchtower*, page 76 adds: "Upon arriving home after the program, a family of Jehovah's witnesses may spend time discussing the meaning of this significant occasion. All of this helps to bring the family closer together and spiritually enriches them."

We appreciate the fine example you elders and your families show in this regard, since the deep respect you demonstrate for the significance of the Lord's Evening Meal is closely followed by those of the flock under your care. (1 Pet. 5:3) We pray Jehovah's blessings on your preparations for the upcoming Lord's evening meal. May this year's occasion give all of us the opportunity to demonstrate that we truly respect the loving provision of the ransom sacrifice.

We take this opportunity to express our warm appreciation for the work you render in behalf of the flock.

Your brothers,

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