



WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF BRITAIN

THE RIDGEWAY LONDON NW7 1RN

TELEPHONE 020 8906 2211

March 2, 2009

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Service Meeting announcements

Dear Brothers:

We are writing to provide further direction regarding how Service Meeting announcements should be handled. The article entitled “New Congregation Meeting Schedule,” found on page 1 of the October 2008 *Our Kingdom Ministry* made the following statement in paragraph 4: “Announcements will usually take five minutes. This should be sufficient time for essential announcements and certain letters from the branch. Such announcements as field service arrangements, cleaning schedules, accounts reports, and routine letters from the branch office do not need to be read from the platform but will be placed on the noticeboard for the brothers to read.” In answer to a number of questions that have been raised, we are providing herewith further direction on terms mentioned in the article.

“Announcements will usually take five minutes”: This means that it may not always be necessary to take up all five minutes for announcements. However, it also means that at times *Our Kingdom Ministry* will adjust the time allotted for announcements. Furthermore, in unusual situations where additional time is needed to read a letter as specifically directed by the **branch office**, the timing of the other parts on the Service Meeting should be adjusted to ensure that the meeting ends on time. (See below section “Certain letters.”) Additionally, in order for the five-minute announcements section to be used effectively, announcements should be clear and concise. At times it will be necessary for the coordinator of the body of elders to hold certain announcements until a later week. Some coordinators of the body of elders have found that it is beneficial to provide the specific wording of the announcements, perhaps in a printout, to the one assigned the part. Ordinarily, announcements should take no more than five minutes.

“Essential announcements”: This means announcements that are needed by the publishers to help them fulfil their congregation responsibilities. Such announcements should be concise and to the point. At times it may suffice simply to announce that a revised schedule for cleaning, an updated schedule for meetings for field service, or an adjusted list of service group assignments, or the like has been placed on the noticeboard. Although the accounts report is no longer read, there may be announcements regarding financial matters and judicial matters that have to be announced to the congregation. In these cases, the announcements are also brief. Time should not be used to relate the attendance figures for the meeting or to make personal announcements, such as greetings and thank-you cards.

“Certain letters”: Letters from the branch office that need to be read to the congregation are always clearly marked as such. The coordinator of the body of elders will arrange for these letters to be read according to the direction given. Concerning the letters that can simply be placed on the noticeboard, a brief announcement should be made stating clearly the subject of each letter and that it has been placed.

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“Routine letters”: Routine letters, such as letters announcing new available publications or acknowledgements of congregation donations, are to be placed on the noticeboard. Effort will be made to keep such letters brief and clear in what is being stated.

“Noticeboard”: As can be appreciated, the noticeboard will become an important venue for communicating information to Kingdom publishers. The body of elders should follow the instructions regarding use of the noticeboard in the January 1989 *Our Kingdom Ministry* Question Box. More information regarding this subject may appear in a future issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry*.

Much effort is being made to ensure that the allotted time for announcements can usually be adhered to. Therefore, following these guidelines should contribute to a smooth-flowing congregation meeting. All who have the privilege of presenting parts on the Service Meeting must be encouraged to hold closely to the allotted time for each part. In that way, a fine example will be set, and the brothers will enjoy an evening of spiritual refreshment, helping them to become better equipped for the Kingdom ministry.—2 Tim. 3:17; 1 Pet. 5:3.

Please be assured of our warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,

Watch Tower B. & J. Society
OF BRITAIN

cc: Travelling overseers

PS to the secretary:

This letter should be retained in the congregation’s permanent file of policy letters. You may wish to update the congregation’s copy of *Index to Letters—For Bodies of Elders* (S-22) at this time as well.