

Note to the speaker:

Talk with audience participation and videos. You may use auxiliary questions to highlight main points and read and apply scriptures from the cited material as time allows. Help the elders to understand that by loyally adhering to the Bible's guidance and the instructions from the faithful and discreet slave, they will handle matters with balance and discernment

WHY BE BALANCED? (2 min.)

Overseers who have consistently proved to be balanced in thinking and judgment are of great value and are deeply appreciated (1Ti 3:2)

Brothers and sisters who are experiencing difficulties find it easy to turn to an elder who is respected for his balanced judgment

When you offer balanced spiritual help to others, they are refreshed and encouraged to continue in Jehovah's service (Mt 11:28-30)

HOW IS BALANCED JUDGMENT ACQUIRED? (10 min.)

While none of us are perfect, with the help of holy spirit we can train our thinking to reflect Jehovah's balanced view on matters

How is balanced judgment acquired?

Jehovah has provided the Scriptures for us to acquire godly wisdom, knowledge, and good judgment (Pr 1:2-7)

Rather than relying on faulty human reasoning, we prepare our minds using God's Word to know "what is just" and to develop thinking ability (Pr 1:3, ftn.)

Personal study and daily Bible reading are vital for elders to maintain balanced judgment and are a demonstration of humility and "reverence for" Jehovah (Pr 1:7, ftn.)

When prayerfully studying God's Word, ask yourself: 'What do I learn about Jehovah and his way of doing things? How can I handle matters in the congregation in a similar way?'

You will grow in wisdom and thinking ability and be better equipped to imitate Jehovah's balanced view of matters

Keeping up-to-date with instructions from the faithful and discreet slave is essential if elders are to exercise balanced judgment

Many inquiries from bodies of elders to the branch office can be answered by referring to direction found in letters to all bodies of elders, the *Shepherding* textbook, and other Bible-based publications

Before contacting the branch office, it is generally best to do thorough research and discuss matters as a body of elders first

Questions: How have you benefited from the letters, forms, and search features for elders on jw.org? Why is it good to check jw.org regularly for instruction from the organization?

Jehovah will answer our prayers for "the wisdom from above," including requests for balanced judgment (Jas 3:17)

WHY IS BALANCED JUDGMENT NEEDED WHEN CONSIDERING APPLICATIONS FOR PIONEER SERVICE? (10 min.)

During this part, we will review selected portions of the May 15, 2017, letter to all bodies of elders. Please follow along in your copy of the letter

Before approving regular and auxiliary pioneers, the Congregation Service Committee must use balanced judgment in determining whether they qualify

No. 9 Exercise Balance When Evaluating Regular Pioneers—Page 2

When publishers who have not first ‘calculated the expense’ or who are not exemplary are approved to serve as regular pioneers, it can be discouraging to the individual and have a negative effect on the attitude that others have toward the pioneer service (Lu 14:28)

Situation: A sister learns that several of her friends have submitted applications for regular pioneer service. Excited about the possibility of attending Pioneer Service School with them, she also asks for an application. However, the last two times she served as an auxiliary pioneer she did not meet the hour requirement

Question: Although first serving as an auxiliary pioneer is not a requirement before being approved to serve as a regular pioneer, what guideline in paragraph 2 of the May 15, 2017, letter should the Congregation Service Committee keep in mind when considering this sister’s application? [In view of her past difficulties, they should be satisfied that she has organized her personal affairs and prepared a practical schedule for meeting the hour requirement]

Situation: A teenage brother from a single-parent family is responding to the elders’ efforts to help him progress spiritually and establish theocratic goals. At times, though, his dress and grooming is sloppy and he has a tendency to speak disrespectfully to his mother. He asks for a regular pioneer application

Questions:

1. Which guideline in paragraph 2 of the May 15, 2017, letter should the Congregation Service Committee especially keep in mind when considering this brother’s application? [The applicant must be an exemplary Christian]
2. How might the elders allow emotion to cloud their judgment in considering this request?

Elders with balanced judgment recognize that those approved to serve as regular pioneers should be exemplary and meet the requirements (*od* 102 ¶13)

If applicants are not setting the proper example in the congregation, then it is best that they be given further assistance rather than granting them this privilege of service

EXERCISE BALANCE WHEN EVALUATING THE ACTIVITY OF REGULAR PIONEERS (36 min.)

Balanced judgment is also needed when reviewing the field service activity of regular pioneers who did not meet the annual hour requirement

Sometimes elders become sentimental and do not wish to delete those who obviously cannot meet the hour requirement of regular pioneer service

How can elders exercise balance when evaluating the activity of regular pioneers?

In the following video, note how one Congregation Service Committee considers the circumstances of a regular pioneer sister who is no longer able to meet the hour requirement

<<START VIDEO>>

[9-minute 34-second segment]

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Questions:

1. How could the service committee have been better prepared for the meeting? [By carefully reading the May 15, 2017, letter]
2. What did the elders do that showed their desire to handle matters in a balanced way? [In their discussion they read from the May 15, 2017, letter to help guide their thinking. They also consulted beforehand with the group overseer about the individual’s circumstances. They took a sufficient amount of time to consider the matter and did not rush to a conclusion]

No. 9 Exercise Balance When Evaluating Regular Pioneers—Page 3

3. How did the elders display balanced judgment in how they initially handled Sister Lowe's health difficulties? [They allowed her time to recover from surgery. After that, they met with her again to see how she was doing]
4. What helped them to determine that her situation was not of a temporary nature?
5. What thought did they give to how they would explain their decision to Sister Lowe? [They considered Biblical examples that would help her to have the right viewpoint of no longer serving as a regular pioneer]
6. Why would this be a kind and effective way to care for the matter?
7. Why is it unloving to allow a pioneer to continue when he is not able to meet the hour requirement?

In the next video, consider how the service committee reaches a balanced decision when determining whether a longtime pioneer sister qualifies to be an infirm regular pioneer

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[5-minute 14-second segment]

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Questions:

1. Paragraph 18 of the May 15, 2017, letter explains that to qualify for consideration as an infirm regular pioneer, the pioneer must be (1) over 50 years old and (2) have pioneered for at least 15 cumulative years. What other requirement did the service committee identify? [The individual must also have a heartfelt desire to serve always as a regular pioneer]
2. How would the elders determine whether it was the sister's sincere desire to serve always as a regular pioneer? [They would ask her. Paragraph 18 states: "If an older pioneer who develops health problems is willing to transfer to the publisher ranks, there is no need to give consideration to allowing this brother to serve as an infirm regular pioneer"]
3. Who else must be consulted before a decision is made as to whether one could be designated as an infirm regular pioneer? [The circuit overseer]

Elders should be supportive of regular pioneers who provide valuable help to Jehovah's organization in a number of ways apart from the field ministry (1Co 15:58)

Many are assisting with the construction and maintenance of Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls

Some work with Disaster Relief Committees, Convention Committees, Hospital Liaison Committees, or Patient Visitation Groups

Others serve as substitute circuit overseers or do temporary or remote Bethel work

Some brothers coordinate prison witnessing and special metropolitan public witnessing arrangements

Bodies of elders would not want to make it difficult for regular pioneers to participate in these aspects of sacred service

Such pioneers should not be made to feel guilty because they are unable to support local arrangements fully

How much better it is for elders to support these self-sacrificing servants so they can put their whole heart into assisting God's organization in such ways

In the next video, let's see how the Congregation Service Committee displays reasonableness when considering the circumstances of a regular pioneer brother whose additional theocratic responsibilities limit his ability to meet the regular pioneer hour requirement

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[5-minute 14-second segment]

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Question: How did the service committee show insight when considering the circumstances of the brother? [They understood that he spends many more hours in theocratic projects than he can receive hour credit for. They recognized that it is not inappropriate for him to take a vacation. They determined that it would be good to remind the body of elders of written organizational direction so that all of the elders would have the proper view of his activity]

When the secretary and service overseer monitor closely the activity of the pioneers and address situations as they arise, it contributes to the pioneers being productive and setting a good example

STRIVE TO BE BALANCED AND REASONABLE (1 min.)

There are many areas in which you will be called upon to prove yourselves trustworthy by showing balanced judgment

 Strive to become known for your reasonableness (Php 4:5)

 Rely on God's Word as well as the direction from the faithful and discreet slave when assisting our brothers and sisters

As you prayerfully take the time to consider the needs of the congregation, Jehovah God will help you to exercise balanced judgment (Jas 3:13)

[Announce the break]