

# ORGANIZED TO DO JEHOVAH'S WILL

"To do your will,  
O my God, I have delighted."  
—Ps. 40:8.

This Book Issued To \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Dear Fellow Ministers:

*Organized to Do Jehovah's Will* is published for Jehovah's Witnesses. This book makes clear what is involved in pleasing God and finding delight in doing his will. It provides an overall view of how the Christian congregation is organized for getting God's work done. The book offers counsel and direction to help us maintain unity with our brothers worldwide. (1 Pet. 2:17; 5:9) It highlights how we can have a share in declaring the good news of the Kingdom in recognition of God's will that "all sorts of men . . . come to an accurate knowledge of truth."—1 Tim. 2:4; Matt. 24:14.

In addition to preaching the good news of the Kingdom, we desire to render needed spiritual assistance to all those who are being drawn to Jehovah in response to the invitation to praise him in association with his people. (Ps. 145:21; Rev. 22:17) New ones need to become familiar with the operation of Jehovah's organization and learn how they can have a share in the modern-day preaching work. They are encouraged to continue in their endeavors to meet the Scriptural requirements for becoming dedicated and baptized Witnesses of Jehovah.

General information is here published concerning the duties of elders and ministerial servants, judicial procedures, and various other features of congregation organization. Details regarding these matters are reviewed from time to time in *The Watchtower*, *Our Kingdom Ministry*, and other publications of Jehovah's Witnesses.

It is our prayer that the application of what is contained in this publication will help you to progress spiritually. May you continue to find delight in doing Jehovah's will in harmony with his organized people!

Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses



loved by the slave class for their loyal, zealous support.

### **THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

"The faithful and discreet slave" seeks to preserve unity and makes it possible organizationally for 'all things to take place decently and by arrangement.' (1 Cor. 14:40) To accomplish this in the first century, a group of anointed Christians from among the faithful and discreet slave class were chosen as its representatives. As such, they did not consult with all anointed elders in the world before making decisions. From their position in the Jerusalem congregation, they served as a governing body for the entire anointed Christian congregation.

From Pentecost 33 C.E. onward, the faithful apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ took the lead in providing direction for the newly founded Christian congregation. (Acts 4:33, 35, 37; 5:18, 29) By about the year 49 C.E., this governing body had been enlarged to include more than Jesus' apostles. When the circumcision issue was decided, that body included "the apostles and older men in Jerusalem." (Acts 15:1, 2) It was their responsibility to consider matters affecting Christians everywhere. They sent out letters and decrees, all of which strengthened the congregations and made it possible for the disciples to remain united in thought and action. The congregations followed the direction of the governing body, and as a result, they received Jehovah's blessing and prospered.—Acts 8:1, 14, 15; 15:22-31; 16:4, 5.

The value of such an arrangement is evident today. The anointed ones making up the present-day Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses have decades of faithful service and theocratic experience



behind them. They offer spiritual direction to Jehovah's people, as did the first-century governing body. The Governing Body also continues to carry the responsibility of overseeing the preaching work, producing Bible study material, and arranging for the appointment of overseers to serve in various capacities in the organization. These are some of the Kingdom interests of Christ that are being cared for today. Like the early Christians, we gladly look to spiritually mature men for Bible-based direction and guidance in matters of worship.

As was true in the first century, the Governing Body today is made up of imperfect men. However, Jehovah has used imperfect humans in the past to accomplish his will. He instructed Noah to build an ark and to preach about the coming destruction of his day. (Gen. 6:13, 14, 22; 2 Pet. 2:5) Moses was appointed to lead Jehovah's people out of Egypt. (Ex. 3:10) Imperfect men were inspired to write the Bible. (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21) Jehovah's use of imperfect men today to direct the preaching and disciple-making work does not weaken our confidence in God's organization. Rather, we are strengthened because we know that without Jehovah's backing, the Governing Body could never accomplish all that they do.

### **WHY TRUST "THE FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE"**

There are many reasons to have complete trust in the slave class. First and foremost, Jesus has appointed them over *all* his precious "belongings." This is a clear indication that he has complete trust in them.



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Yes, we have every reason to trust “the faithful and discreet slave” fully. Satan, the god of this system of things, is making an all-out effort to disgrace Jehovah’s name and organization. (2 Cor. 4:4) Do not fall prey to Satan’s wicked tactics. (2 Cor. 2:11) He knows that only a short period of time remains before his abyssing, and he is trying to take down with him as many of Jehovah’s people as possible. (Rev. 12:12) However, as Satan intensifies his efforts, may we draw ever closer to Jehovah by manifesting complete trust in the channel that He is using to direct His people today. Satan is waging war against “the remaining ones” of the slave class, who have been entrusted with directing “the work of bearing witness to Jesus.” (Rev. 12:17) Our full confidence in Jehovah and his arrangements results in a united brotherhood.

## CHAPTER 4

### HOW THE CONGREGATION IS ORGANIZED AND GOVERNED

**T**HE apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians expressed an important truth about God when he wrote: “God is a God, not of disorder, but of peace.” Then commenting further with regard to congregation meetings, he said: “Let all things take place decently and by arrangement.”—1 Cor. 14:33, 40.

At the very beginning of the same letter, the apostle gave admonition concerning reported dissensions within the Corinthian congregation. Paul exhorted the brothers there to “speak in agreement” and to be “fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of



thought.” (1 Cor. 1:10, 11) He then gave counsel with regard to various matters that were affecting the unity of the congregation. Using the illustration of a human body, he showed clearly the need for unity and cooperation. Hence, he urged all in the Christian congregation, regardless of their role, to care for one another in a loving way. (1 Cor. 12:12-26) Such harmonious cooperation among the members of the congregation implies an orderly arrangement—organization.

But how was the Christian congregation to be organized? Who would organize it? What kind of structure would it have, and who would serve in appointed positions? By letting the Bible be our guide, we get clear answers to these questions.—1 Cor. 4:6.

### ORGANIZED THEOCRATICALLY

The Christian congregation was established in 33 C.E. on the Jewish festival day of Pentecost. What can we learn about the congregation at that time? It was organized and governed theocratically, that is, under God (Greek, *the·os'*) rule (*kra'tos*). The inspired account of what took place there in Jerusalem nearly 2,000 years ago leaves no doubt that the congregation of anointed Christians was established by God. (Acts 2:1-47) It was his building, his household. (1 Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:19) The same pattern of organization and operation that was established during the first century is adhered to by the Christian congregation of God today, which has now been enlarged by the addition of the “great crowd.”—Rev. 7:9, 10.

The early congregation began with about 120 members. Holy spirit was poured out first upon these in fulfillment of Joel 2:28, 29. (Acts 2:16-18) But that same day, about 3,000 others were baptized in water



and brought into the spirit-begotten congregation. They had embraced the word about the Christ and “continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles.” After that, “Jehovah continued to join to them daily those being saved.”—Acts 2:41, 42, 47.

The growth of the anointed congregation in Jerusalem became such that the Jewish high priest complained that the disciples had filled Jerusalem with their teaching. The new disciples in Jerusalem included many Jewish priests, who became part of the congregation.—Acts 5:28; 6:7.

Jesus had said: “You will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) And so it was that when great persecution arose in Jerusalem following the death of Stephen, the disciples living there were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. But wherever they went, they continued declaring the good news and making more disciples, including some from among the Samaritans. (Acts 8:1-13) Still later, the good news began to be preached with good success among the uncircumcised, non-Jewish nations. (Acts 10:1-48) All this preaching activity and the making of many disciples resulted in new Christian congregations being formed outside Jerusalem.—Acts 11:19-21; 14:21-23.

What arrangements were made to ensure that each newly established congregation was organized and governed God’s way, theocratically? Through the operation of God’s spirit, provision was made for undershepherds to care for the flock. In congregations that Paul and Barnabas visited during their first missionary journey, they made appointments of older men. (Acts 14:23) Acts chapter 20 relates information about the apostle Paul’s meeting with



the older men of the congregation in Ephesus. Paul said to them: "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son." (Acts 20:28) These were older men in a spiritual sense. They qualified for appointment because of meeting Scriptural requirements. (1 Tim. 3:1-7) Paul's fellow worker Titus was authorized to make appointments of older men in the congregations of Crete.—Titus 1:5.

As more congregations were formed, the apostles and older men in Jerusalem continued to serve as the principal overseers of the expanded international congregation of the first century. They served as a governing body for the entire Christian congregation.

Writing to the congregation in Ephesus, the apostle Paul explained that by working in accord with God's spirit, the Christian congregation could maintain unity through adherence to the headship of Jesus Christ. The apostle urged Christians there to cultivate humility and to observe the oneness of the spirit in peaceful association with all members of the congregation. (Eph. 4:1-6) Then he quoted Psalm 68:18 and applied it to Jehovah's provision for spiritually qualified men to serve the needs of the congregation as apostles, prophets, evangelizers, shepherds, and teachers. Such men, as gifts from Jehovah, would build up the entire congregation to a spiritual fullness that would be pleasing to God.—Eph. 4:7-16.

### **CONGREGATION TODAY FOLLOWS APOSTOLIC PATTERN**

Today a similar pattern of organization is followed in all congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. These



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collectively form a united worldwide congregation built around the nucleus of spirit-anointed ones. (Zech. 8:23) This is possible because Jesus Christ, true to his promise, has loyally remained with his anointed disciples “all the days until the conclusion of the system of things.” Those brought into the growing congregation today embrace the good news of God, dedicate their life unreservedly to Jehovah God to do his will, and are baptized as disciples of Jesus Christ. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 1:14; Acts 2:41) They recognize “the fine shepherd,” Jesus Christ, as Head not only over the anointed members of the congregation but also over the entire flock, which includes the “other sheep.” (John 10:14, 16; Eph. 1:22, 23) That “one flock” maintain their unity by loyally recognizing the headship of Christ and also by submitting to the organizational channel, “the faithful and discreet slave,” whom Christ appointed. May we continue to manifest full confidence and trust in this faithful slave class today.—Matt. 24:45.

**USE OF RELIGIOUS CORPORATIONS**

During these last days of this wicked system of things, the belongings of the Master have increased abundantly throughout all the earth. This has placed a heavy responsibility on ‘the faithful slave.’ In discharging the responsibility to provide spiritual food at the proper time and in order to get the good news of the Kingdom preached before the end comes, the slave class has formed certain agencies, or legal entities. It has proved to be the course of wisdom to organize certain corporations that are recognized by the laws of various countries. These religious corporations own and operate printing facilities that produce and distribute Bibles and Bible literature worldwide for use in the Kingdom ministry.



These corporations are exclusively devoted to advancing the interests of true worship in the earth. All these legal instrumentalities cooperate with one another. Such legal corporations are used to facilitate the preaching of the good news worldwide and to care for the spiritual needs of the entire congregation of God in all parts of the earth.

### **STRUCTURE OF BRANCH ORGANIZATION**

Whenever a branch office is established, a Branch Committee of three or more elders is appointed to care for the various responsibilities involved in looking after the work in the country or countries under the jurisdiction of that particular branch. One member of the committee serves as the Branch Committee coordinator.

Local congregations under each branch are organized into circuits, and a number of circuits make up a district. Circuits and districts may be of various sizes, depending on geographic and language considerations as well as the number of congregations within the area assigned to the branch. A circuit overseer is appointed to serve the congregations in each circuit. A district overseer visits the different circuits, serves at circuit assemblies, and spends some time serving congregations, usually with the circuit overseer present. The duties of traveling overseers are set out from time to time in *Our Kingdom Ministry* as well as in correspondence directed to them by the branch office.

All in the organization recognize God's administration. The congregations acknowledge and conform to organizational arrangements that are outlined for the benefit of all. They accept the appointment of older men who oversee the work in branches, dis-



tricts, circuits, and congregations. They look to “the faithful and discreet slave” for spiritual food at the proper time. ‘The faithful slave’ today, in turn, adheres strictly to the headship of Christ, holds to Bible principles, and submits to the direction of the holy spirit. As all work together in unity, they experience results similar to those experienced by the congregations in the first century. We are told at Acts 16:5: “Indeed, the congregations continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number from day to day.”

## CHAPTER 5

### OVERSEERS TO SHEPHERD THE FLOCK

**D**URING his earthly ministry, Jesus proved himself to be “the fine shepherd.” (John 10:11) Upon viewing the crowds that eagerly followed him, “he felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd.” (Matt. 9:36) Peter and the other apostles took note of his loving concern. How different Jesus was from the false shepherds of Israel, who neglected the flock to such an extent that the sheep were scattered and spiritually starved! (Ezek. 34:7, 8) By paying attention to Jesus’ fine example of teaching and to the way he cared for the sheep even to the point of laying down his life for them, the apostles learned how to help those with faith return to Jehovah, ‘the shepherd and overseer of their souls.’—1 Pet. 2:25.

By precept and example, Jesus emphasized the serious responsibility that he laid upon the apostles to care for the sheep. When speaking to Peter on one occasion, Jesus impressed very strongly upon the



minds and hearts of the apostles the importance of feeding and shepherding the sheep. (John 21:15-17) Peter was deeply moved by this, as indicated later in his exhortation to older men. In his first inspired letter, he admonished overseers: "Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock."—1 Pet. 5:1-3.

Peter's words apply with equal force to overseers in the congregation today. The responsibility of overseers today is the same as it was in the first century, namely, to shepherd the flock of God. In his letter, Peter emphasized the proper attitude that overseers should have in caring for such responsibility. Imitating Jesus, they should serve willingly and eagerly as examples to the flock, taking the lead in Jehovah's service.

We can be grateful for the spirit-appointed overseers in the congregation. The benefits we receive are many. For example, overseers give spiritual encouragement and personal attention to the needs of individual members of the congregation. Each week they preside with earnestness at congregation meetings, where all are nourished in the faith. (Rom. 12:8) Their efforts to protect the flock from harmful elements, such as wicked men, contribute to our spiritual security. (Isa. 32:2; Titus 1:9-11) Their fine example and lead in the field ministry encourage us to keep active in preaching the good news regularly each month. (Phil. 3:16, 17; Heb. 13:15-17) Through these "gifts in men," Jehovah has provided well for the building up of the congregation.—Eph. 4:8, 11, 12.



**QUALIFICATIONS FOR OVERSEERS**

To ensure proper care of the congregation, men appointed to serve as overseers must meet the requirements set out in God's Word. Only if they qualify can it be said that they are appointed by holy spirit. (Acts 20:28) Admittedly, the Scriptural standards for Christian overseers are high, since these men have the serious responsibilities of taking the lead in Jehovah's worship and of being exemplary in Christian conduct. (1 Cor. 11:1; Heb. 13:7) But the standards are not so high that they cannot be met by Christian men who have real love for Jehovah and are willing to be used by him. The high standards call for those appointed as elders to be good examples in the congregation. It should be obvious to all that the overseers are individuals who apply Bible counsel in the affairs of life.

The apostle Paul set out in his first letter to Timothy and his letter to Titus the basic Scriptural requirements for overseers. At 1 Timothy 3:1-7, we read: "If any man is reaching out for an office of overseer, he is desirous of a fine work. The overseer should therefore be irreprehensible, a husband of one wife, moderate in habits, sound in mind, orderly, hospitable, qualified to teach, not a drunken brawler, not a smiter, but reasonable, not belligerent, not a lover of money, a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection with all seriousness; (if indeed any man does not know how to preside over his own household, how will he take care of God's congregation?) not a newly converted man, for fear that he might get puffed up with pride and fall into the judgment passed upon the Devil. Moreover, he should also have a fine testimony from people on the outside, in order



that he might not fall into reproach and a snare of the Devil.”

Paul wrote to Titus: “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might correct the things that were defective and might make appointments of older men in city after city, as I gave you orders; if there is any man free from accusation, a husband of one wife, having believing children that were not under a charge of debauchery nor unruly. For an overseer must be free from accusation as God’s steward, not self-willed, not prone to wrath, not a drunken brawler, not a smiter, not greedy of dishonest gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, sound in mind, righteous, loyal, self-controlled, holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching, that he may be able both to exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict.” (Titus 1:5-9) Paul’s counsel concerning overseers emphasizes what is involved in carrying out their responsibilities. Other Bible writers discuss additional Christian qualities required of men appointed as overseers, or shepherds, of the congregation. —Jas. 3:13, 17, 18.

Although the Scriptural requirements may at first seem to be somewhat overwhelming, there should be no reason for Christian men to shy away from desiring the fine work associated with the office of overseer. By taking the lead in manifesting fine Christian qualities, overseers encourage other members of the congregation to do the same. This is indicated by what the apostle Paul wrote in describing how “gifts in men” are provided “with a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work, for the building up of the body of the Christ, *until we all attain to the oneness in the faith and in the accurate*



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*knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ.*" (Eph. 4:8, 12, 13) Since all Christians are to strive to attain spiritual maturity, those standing before the congregation as appointed overseers are required to be taking the lead.

Paul instructed Timothy and Titus to appoint qualified men in the congregation to serve as overseers. They would *not* be mere boys or *newly converted* men, but they would be individuals with experience in Christian living, reflecting a broad knowledge of the Bible, a deep understanding of it, and a genuine love for the congregation. The overseers would be individuals who have the courage to speak up when wrongdoing exists and to take the needed action to correct it, thus protecting the flock from any who would selfishly exploit them. (Isa. 32:2) The overseers would be men readily recognized by all in the congregation as spiritually mature, having genuine concern for the flock of God. Their overall way of life would show this.

Those qualifying for appointment as overseers of the flock of God would be demonstrating a measure of practical wisdom in their daily lives. If married, they would be adhering to the Christian standard for marriage, namely, *husband of one wife*, and would be *presiding over their own household in a fine manner*. If the overseer has *believing children* who are *in subjection with all seriousness* and are *not under a charge of debauchery nor unruly*, other members of the congregation could confidently approach the overseer for counsel and advice on a wide range of personal matters having to do with family life and Christian living. Having conducted themselves properly within the family arrangement as well as within the community



in general, these men would also be *irreprehensible*, be *free from accusation*, and *have a fine testimony even from people on the outside*. No valid charge of improper conduct could be brought against them to mar the reputation of the congregation. They would not have been reproved recently for serious wrongdoing. Others in the congregation would be moved to imitate this fine example and entrust their spiritual life to the shepherds' care.—1 Cor. 11:1; 16:15, 16; Phil. 2:25, 29; Heb. 13:7, 17.

Such qualified men would be able to serve the Christian congregation in a role similar to that of the older men of Israel who were described as “wise and discreet and experienced.” (Deut. 1:13) They would not be without sin. (Rom. 3:23) But they would be known in the congregation and in the community as upright and God-fearing men who have demonstrated over a period of time that they conduct their entire life on the basis of God's principles. Their blamelessness would give them freeness of speech before the congregation.

Men qualifying for appointment as overseers would display *moderation in personal habits* and in their dealings with others. They would not be fanatics, but their way of life would be characterized by balance, *orderliness*, and *self-control*. Moderation would be demonstrated in such things as eating, drinking, recreation, hobbies, and entertainment. They would be moderate in the use of alcoholic beverages so as *not* to leave themselves open to charges of drunkenness or of being a *drunken brawler*. One whose senses have been dulled by intoxicating drink easily loses self-control and is not in a position to watch over the spiritual interests of the congregation.

Exercising oversight of the affairs of the congregation requires a man to demonstrate a measure of *or-*



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*derliness*, being systematic in life, habits, and work. This includes his personal appearance, his home, and his personal activities. Such a man avoids procrastination, and he is able to see what is required and to plan accordingly. He adheres to theocratic order.

An overseer must be *reasonable*. He must be able to work in unity with and cooperate with others within the body of older men, who are charged with the oversight of the congregation. He should have a proper view of himself in relation to others, both inside and outside the congregation. As a reasonable person, the overseer would not be opinionated, always considering his views as superior to those of his fellow elders. Others may excel in qualities or abilities that he may lack. Reasonableness comes as a result of basing one's conclusions solidly on the Scriptures and of striving to imitate the example of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 2:2-8) By showing proper respect for others and considering others as superior to himself, an elder would *not become belligerent or be a smiter* of others, either physically or verbally. He would *not be self-willed*, always insisting that his way or his point of view must be accepted as best. He would *not be prone to wrath* but would be peaceable in his dealings with others.

Similarly, one qualifying to serve as an overseer in the congregation should be *sound in mind*. This means that he should have a good comprehension of Jehovah's principles and their application. He should be levelheaded, not hasty in judgment. He should be receptive to counsel and direction. He should not be double-minded, hypocritical, or fanatic.

Paul reminded Titus that an overseer should also be *a lover of goodness*. He should be *righteous* and *loyal*. These qualities would be reflected in his dealings



with others and in his firm stand for what is right and good. He would be unwavering in his devotion to Jehovah and consistent in upholding righteous principles when making judgments. He would be able to keep a confidence.

As one who is sound in mind, of course, he would not be overly demanding in what he expects of others. Nor would the overseer be unduly concerned about material advantages for himself, *not greedy of dishonest gain, not a lover of money*. He would not use his office to take material advantage of the brothers under his care, nor would he hold back because of the reasonable material sacrifices he may be required to make in order to give generously of his time in caring for the needs of the congregation. His love for the brothers, as well as for strangers, and his self-sacrificing endeavors in their behalf would mean that he is genuinely *hospitable*, freely giving of himself and his belongings for the benefit of others. —Acts 20:33-35.

In order to carry out his assignment effectively, an overseer, or shepherd, of the congregation would need to be *qualified to teach*. According to Paul's words to Titus, the overseer would be "*holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching, that he may be able both to exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict.*" (Titus 1:9) In employing his art of teaching, the overseer would be able to reason with others, produce evidence, overcome objections, and apply the Scriptures in such a way that others would be convinced and have their faith strengthened. The overseer would be able to exercise such teaching ability under circumstances both favorable and unfavorable. (2 Tim. 4:2) He would have the patience needed to reprove with



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mildness one who is in error or to convince a doubter and move him to profitable works on the basis of faith. Being qualified to teach either before an audience or on a one-on-one basis would give evidence that the overseer meets this important requirement.

The apostle Peter wrote that the older men of the congregation should serve *willingly* and *eagerly*, neither under compulsion nor begrudgingly. They should be enthusiastic in their endeavors. They should be *taking the lead, becoming examples to the flock*.—Heb. 13:17.

All of this may seem like a great deal to expect of one who serves as an overseer. Certainly no overseer could measure up perfectly to the high standard set forth in the Bible, as outlined here, but none of the appointed elders in the congregation should be so significantly deficient in any one of these qualities that the deficiency could be considered a serious flaw. Some elders may have certain outstanding qualities, whereas others of the body may excel in a number of different qualities. The effect is that the body as a whole will have within itself all the fine qualities that are necessary for exercising proper oversight of the congregation of God.

When recommending men for appointment as overseers, the body of elders will want to keep in mind their own standing before Jehovah and their relationship with fellow Christians. Romans 12:3 counsels that each one should in no way “think more of himself than it is necessary to think; but to think so as to have a sound mind, each one as God has distributed to him a measure of faith.” Each should consider himself a lesser one. None should prove to be “righteous overmuch” when examining the qualifications of another. (Eccl. 7:16) Having clearly in mind



the Scriptural requirements for elders, the body would want to determine whether a brother being considered measures up to those standards to a reasonable degree or he is so seriously deficient in one or more of the Scriptural requirements that he does not qualify to serve. Allowing for human imperfections and being free of biased leanings and hypocrisy, appointed elders will make their recommendations in a manner showing due respect for Jehovah's righteous standards and for the good of the congregation. Like Timothy and Titus, elders today need to give prayerful consideration to each recommendation and follow the direction of God's holy spirit. This is one of the serious responsibilities they shoulder, and they must do so in accord with Paul's admonition 'never to lay their hands hastily upon any man.'—1 Tim. 5: 21, 22.

Men meeting the Christian standards for overseers are able to protect the congregation from spiritual dangers, and they serve as fine examples of Christian conduct for all to imitate. They have freeness of speech, enabling them to be bold in giving needed counsel to those within the congregation and to be zealous in proclaiming the good news in the field ministry.—Acts 4:29; 1 Tim. 3:13; Heb. 10:19-23, 35.

### **FRUITAGE OF THE SPIRIT**

Spiritually qualified men would give evidence in their life that they are directed by holy spirit. They would be producing the fruitage of the spirit, described at Galatians 5:22, 23 as "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." Their oversight of the congregation would be refreshing to the brothers and would serve to unite the congregation in rendering sacred ser-



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vice. Their course of conduct and the fruits of their labors would give evidence that they are appointed by holy spirit. (Acts 20:28) Having the spiritual requirements for overseers and shepherds stated so precisely in the inspired Scriptures has made it possible to have qualified men appointed to shepherd the flock today.

**MEN WHO PROMOTE UNITY**

It is vital that elders work together to promote unity in the congregation. While having personalities that vary widely, they preserve their unity by listening respectfully to one another even though they may not agree on every matter they discuss. As long as no Bible principle is being violated, each should be willing to yield and to support the final decision of the body of elders. A yielding spirit shows that one is guided by “the wisdom from above,” which is “peaceable, reasonable.” (Jas. 3:17, 18) No elder should think that he is above the others in the body, and no elder should try to dominate the others. Elders are really cooperating with Jehovah when they cooperate as a body for the good of the congregation. —1 Cor., chap. 12; Col. 2:19.

**REACHING OUT**

The office of overseer is to be desired by mature Christian men. (1 Tim. 3:1) However, the appointment means work and self-sacrifice. It means making oneself available to serve the needs of the brothers, caring for their spiritual interests. Reaching out for the office means striving to meet the qualifications set out in the Scriptures. The overseers of the congregation have both responsibility and accountability in caring for those entrusted to them.



Overseers take very seriously what is stated at Hebrews 13:17, where they are referred to as “those who are taking the lead,” those who are “keeping watch over” the souls of the brothers, and “those who will render an account.” Overseers must exercise special care not to ‘lord it over’ the flock of God, not to use their position of responsibility for selfish advantage, and not to serve because they feel that they are compelled to do so. The overseers must prove themselves to be loving shepherds of the flock of God.—1 Pet. 5:2, 3; Prov. 27:23.

Hebrews 13:17 gives direction also to members of the congregation when it says: “Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.” Although the overseers are imperfect men, there is no need for anyone in the congregation to hold back from being submissive, since it is Jehovah’s arrangement and He will hold the overseers accountable for their actions. They are representing him and his theocratic rule. Just as Jehovah uses holy spirit to appoint a man, by means of that same holy spirit, Jehovah will remove from office those overseers who fail to manifest the fruitage of the spirit and whose pattern of life falls short of the Scriptural requirements.

Do we not truly appreciate the hard work and fine example of the congregation overseers? In writing to the congregation at Thessalonica, Paul admonished the brothers: “We request you, brothers, to have regard for those who are working hard among you and presiding over you in the Lord and admonishing you; and to give them more than extraordinary consider-



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ation in love because of their work.” (1 Thess. 5:12, 13) Much of the hard work of the congregation overseers makes our service to God easier and more enjoyable. Also, in his first letter to Timothy, Paul makes mention of the attitude that members of the congregation should cultivate toward the overseers, saying: “Let the older men who preside in a fine way be reckoned worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching.”—1 Tim. 5:17.

**PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES MAY CHANGE**

Of course, a brother who has served faithfully for a period of time may become physically ill or otherwise incapacitated, perhaps because of advancing age, and may no longer be able to care for the responsibilities of an overseer as he once did or in the way that other overseers do. Even so, he should still be viewed and respected as an older man as long as he is appointed. There would be no need for him to step aside on account of his limitations. He is still worthy of the double honor given to all hardworking older men who are serving to the best of their respective abilities in shepherding the flock.

But if a brother should feel that it would be best for him to step aside because of changed personal circumstances that limit his ability to serve, he may choose to do so. (1 Pet. 5:2) He should still be viewed with respect and be able to do much good in the congregation, even though no longer having assignments and duties given to elders.

**POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY  
IN THE CONGREGATION**

The Governing Body may arrange for men who qualify to serve as overseers in any locality at any



time. The Governing Body is not bound by the recommendations of any local body of elders. Such recommendations serve merely as a guide and may even be rejected for reasons well-known to the Governing Body. Also, the Governing Body may authorize certain representatives to make appointments of overseers.—1 Tim. 1:3; Titus 1:5.

Whenever there are appointments or deletions of overseers, appropriate announcements are made to the congregation. This enables all concerned to know who are currently serving within the local congregation, and they can thus cooperate with the arrangement that is in effect.

Elders care for a variety of responsibilities in the congregation. There is a presiding overseer, a secretary, a service overseer, a *Watchtower* Study conductor, and a Theocratic Ministry School overseer. Some elders, if not all, serve as Congregation Book Study overseers. The elders serve in these positions for an indefinite period of time. Of course, if a brother holding any of these positions moves, is unable to care for his responsibilities because of health reasons, or becomes disqualified for failure to measure up to the Scriptural requirements, another elder is selected to handle the assignment. In congregations where the number of overseers is limited, it may be necessary for an elder to handle more than one assignment until other brothers qualify to be appointed as elders.

The presiding overseer serves as chairman at meetings of the body of elders. He should be a good organizer and able to preside in real earnest. (Rom. 12:8) He is responsible for overseeing the Service Meeting. He also arranges for public talks, at times using another elder or a well-qualified ministerial servant to assist him if needed.



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The secretary handles congregation records and keeps the elders informed about important communications. If necessary, another elder or a capable ministerial servant may be assigned to assist in caring for some routine matters.

Arrangements for field activity and other service-related matters come under the direction of the service overseer. He schedules regular visits to all Congregation Book Study groups so that once each month he visits a different group and gives a service talk. On the weekend of his visit, he will work with the group in the field ministry and help publishers with their return visits and Bible studies. In smaller congregations where there are only one or two book studies, he may arrange to visit each one twice during the year.

The specific duties of these brothers, along with the *Watchtower* Study conductor, the Theocratic Ministry School overseer, Congregation Book Study overseers, and others who make up the body of elders, are set out from time to time in *Our Kingdom Ministry* and letters from the branch office.

Depending on the number available and their individual abilities, various elders handle assignments in connection with the other congregation meetings each week. These meetings are planned and prepared so that they will be informative and spiritually upbuilding. The elders are responsible for presenting instructive public talks. Besides teaching in the congregation, the elders take the lead in the field ministry, working along with the publishers.

It is suggested that the body of elders in each congregation meets periodically to discuss matters related to the spiritual progress of the congregation.



Two such meetings are held each year in conjunction with the regular visits of the circuit overseer. About three months after each visit of the circuit overseer, a meeting should be scheduled. These four meetings during the year are most likely sufficient for resolving any matters requiring the attention of the entire body of elders. Of course, the elders may convene at any time circumstances make it advisable. But if each one gives proper attention to his assigned duties and if the work of the elders is being adequately supervised and coordinated through the presiding overseer, meetings involving the entire body of elders can be kept to a minimum.

### **CONGREGATION SERVICE COMMITTEE**

There are certain duties that are cared for by the Congregation Service Committee, made up of the presiding overseer, the secretary, and the service overseer. Members of this committee are involved in handling and signing various forms, such as those used in connection with literature inventories and requests, field service reports, and recommendations for appointment or removal of overseers, ministerial servants, and regular pioneers. In addition, the service committee approves the use of the Kingdom Hall for weddings and funerals and is responsible for assigning publishers to book study groups. It also approves applications for auxiliary pioneer service and other avenues of service. From time to time, the branch office calls upon the Congregation Service Committee to perform other duties. While elders on the service committee have been given certain authority to care for matters, these brothers work under the direction of the body of elders.



### **CONGREGATION BOOK STUDY OVERSEER**

One of the outstanding privileges in the congregation is to serve as a Congregation Book Study overseer. Such overseers have the opportunity to help others in a number of areas. Because this responsibility is a serious one, elders should be used if available. If not, then one elder might care for more than one group, doing so at different times during the week. This, however, would depend on his circumstances. Or a capable ministerial servant can be used until such time as an elder can take over. A ministerial servant working in this capacity is called a Congregation Book Study servant, as he does not function as an overseer in the congregation. Rather, he works under the direction of the elders in caring for his responsibility. How a ministerial servant is used is something for the elders to decide. They also decide to which group the elder or ministerial servant is assigned.

One of the chief responsibilities of the Congregation Book Study overseer is to conduct the Congregation Book Study. In order to do so adequately, he must prepare thoroughly. He should know not only the answers to the study questions but also the reasons behind those answers and the value of the material. It should be his goal to help the group get a clear understanding of what is being considered so that they can apply the truths learned to their own life as well as explain them to others. This requires a conscientious effort on his part, even as emphasized by Paul as found at Romans 12:7: "He that teaches, let him be at his teaching."

Another important feature of the book study overseer's work is that of taking the lead in the field



ministry. The regularity, zeal, and enthusiasm that he shows in the field activity will be reflected in the publishers. Because the brothers appreciate the encouragement and help that come through being together, a group witnessing schedule convenient for the majority should be worked out and maintained. (Luke 10:1-16) The overseer needs to plan so that there is always enough territory to work. He will conduct the meeting for field service and organize the publishers for that day's work. When he cannot be there, he should arrange for another elder, a ministerial servant or, if neither is available, a qualified publisher to care for these responsibilities so that the publishers have the good leadership they need.

The service overseer is a real help to the book study overseer and the entire group. A wise book study overseer will plan ahead for the visit of the service overseer, informing his group of the visit and building anticipation for its benefits. When all in the group are kept fully aware of the arrangement, they can enthusiastically support it. There will be a corresponding improvement in their field activity.

Each book study group is purposely kept small. This allows the book study overseer to become well acquainted with all assigned to it. As a loving shepherd, he is keenly interested in each one. He tries to give personal help and encouragement for the field ministry, for support of congregation meetings, and for whatever else is appropriate to help each person keep spiritually strong. Those who become ill or depressed will benefit from a personal visit. An encouraging suggestion or a word of counsel might prompt some to reach out for additional privileges in the congregation and thus become of greater use to their brothers. While most of the book study overseer's ef-



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forts will logically be directed toward helping those in his own group, as an elder and a shepherd, he will have the entire congregation in mind. He is lovingly concerned for all and is ready to help any who are in need.—Acts 20:17, 28.

A responsibility of the Congregation Book Study overseer is to assist in collecting field service reports from the publishers and pioneers in his book study group. These reports are then given, along with the book study attendance figures, to the secretary for compiling. Individual publishers can assist the book study overseer by turning in their field service reports promptly. This can be done by submitting their reports directly to the book study overseer at the end of each month or by placing them in the box designated for service reports at the Kingdom Hall.

**POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY  
IN THE ORGANIZATION**

At times, selected elders are appointed to serve on Hospital Liaison Committees and as members of Patient Visitation Groups. These men visit hospitals and doctors to encourage continued and expanded treatment of Jehovah's Witnesses without using blood. Other overseers are able to advance Kingdom interests by serving as members of Regional Building Committees, Assembly Hall Committees, or district convention committees. The hard work of these brothers and their willingness to expend themselves in this way are very much appreciated by all in the organization. Indeed, we 'hold men of that sort dear.' —Phil. 2:29.

**CITY OVERSEER**

The branch office will appoint a city overseer in cities where there is more than one congregation.



Usually, this appointment is made on the recommendation of the circuit overseer or circuit overseers if more than one serves congregations in that city. The city overseer does not exercise jurisdiction in any congregation other than the one in which he serves as an elder. The branch office may wish to communicate with him on various matters, such as arrangements for assemblies and schools that may be held in his city. However, the branch deals directly with each congregation in regard to literature supplies, monthly field service reports, and other matters.

### **CIRCUIT OVERSEER**

The Governing Body arranges for the appointment of qualified elders to serve as circuit overseers. These are assigned by the branch office to visit the congregations that make up their circuits on a regular basis, usually twice a year. They also periodically visit pioneers, special pioneers, or missionaries serving in isolated territory. They plan their routing and notify each congregation sufficiently in advance so that the visit will result in the most benefit.

The presiding overseer takes the lead in organizing matters so that the visit will prove spiritually refreshing to all. (Rom. 1:11, 12) After he receives notification of the visit and information about the needs of the circuit overseer and (if married) his wife, the presiding overseer makes arrangements through various brothers to get literature supplies, accommodations, and other necessary things. He makes sure that all, including the circuit overseer, are informed of these arrangements.

The circuit overseer will contact the presiding overseer regarding the scheduling of meetings, including meetings for field service. These will be arranged in



accord with local circumstances and the circuit overseer's suggestions as well as what is directed in *Our Kingdom Ministry* and in letters from the branch office. All need to be informed in advance concerning the times of the meetings with the congregation, with the pioneers, and with the elders and ministerial servants, as well as the places and times of meetings for field service. This will enable all to adjust their affairs so that they can benefit from the entire week's activities.

Since the circuit overseer will check the congregation records on Tuesday afternoon, such records should be in good order and available before he arrives. The presiding overseer will be sure to have them at the location where they will be checked. It is helpful if a member of the Congregation Service Committee can be present to render any assistance needed. The circuit overseer will examine the *Congregation's Publisher Record* cards, meeting attendance records, territory records, and the accounts. This will give him some insight into possible needs of the congregation and how he may be of assistance to those responsible for keeping these records.

During his visit, the circuit overseer takes time to speak with the brothers individually as he is able—at meetings, out in the field service, at mealtimes, and otherwise. Additionally, he meets with the elders and ministerial servants, sharing appropriate Scriptural counsel, suggestions, and encouragement that will help them shoulder their responsibilities in serving and shepherding the flock in their care. (Prov. 27:23; Acts 20:26-32; 1 Tim. 4:11-16) He also meets with the pioneers to encourage them in their work and to give personal assistance regarding any problems they may be encountering in their ministry.



If there are other matters that need attention, the circuit overseer will either handle these or assist the elders to the extent possible while he is visiting the congregation. He will strive to help the elders or individuals involved to locate the Scriptural direction that applies. If there has been some serious wrongdoing and the elders need his assistance in handling such, he will set aside time for this purpose. If there is anything that the branch office needs to do in following through, he and the elders will provide the branch with a detailed report on the matter.

While visiting the congregation, the circuit overseer attends the regular congregation meetings. These may be adjusted from time to time in harmony with directions in *Our Kingdom Ministry* or letters from the branch office. He will give several talks designed to encourage, motivate, instruct, and fortify the congregation. He will strive to foster love and appreciation for Jehovah, Jesus Christ, and the organization. The circuit overseer will also encourage zealous participation in field service, providing practical suggestions on how to do the work effectively.

One of the primary objectives of the circuit overseer's visit is to provide leadership in field service. Many in the congregation may be able to adjust their schedule so that they can have a fuller share in field service that week. Some may be able to arrange to auxiliary pioneer the month of his visit. Those desirous of working with him or his wife can make an appointment through the presiding overseer. Much good can be accomplished by taking the circuit overseer or his wife on Bible studies and return visits. At times, adjustments in your schedule may have to be made, but the benefits are worth it. The circuit over-



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seer is encouraged to arrange for an early start in field service each day, taking local circumstances into consideration. Your extra effort to give full support to this aspect of the week's visit is deeply appreciated.—Prov. 27:17.

Every year a circuit assembly and a special assembly day are arranged for each circuit. The circuit overseer is responsible for the operation of the assembly organization on these occasions. On the circuit overseer's recommendation, the branch office appoints permanent assembly personnel: an assembly overseer and an assistant assembly overseer. They are to work closely with the circuit overseer in caring for the assembly organization. This will enable the circuit overseer to give his primary attention to the assembly program. The circuit overseer designates other capable men to care for various departments. He also arranges for an audit of the circuit accounts after each assembly.

The circuit overseer reports his field service directly to the branch office at the end of each month. He is also reimbursed for certain modest expenses incurred, such as travel, food, lodging, and other necessary items required to carry out his work if the congregations do not cover these. Traveling representatives have confidence that as Jesus promised, material needs will be provided if they seek continually the interests of Jehovah's Kingdom. (Luke 12:31) The congregations will want to be conscious of their privilege to display hospitality to these devoted elders who serve them.—3 John 5-8.

**DISTRICT OVERSEER**

The district overseer is also an appointed traveling elder. He is assigned by the branch office to serve a



number of circuits that make up a district. He serves as chairman of the circuit assembly programs in his district and gives the public discourse on such programs. The first part of each week in which a circuit assembly is held, he works with the host congregation in the circuit being served. He takes the lead in group witnessing and gives an upbuilding Scriptural talk to the host congregation.

The branch office assigns each circuit the dates for its circuit assembly and special assembly day and notifies the district overseer of this schedule, which he then follows as his assigned routing. Because of distances involved for the publishers or the small size of assembly facilities, some circuits are divided into sections with a circuit assembly or a special assembly day held for each section. The district overseer is informed of this and plans to spend a week in the circuit for each circuit assembly to be held. In advance, he works out with the circuit overseer which congregation can appropriately be the host congregation for each circuit assembly.

On Tuesday afternoon of his visit, the district overseer gives encouragement to the circuit overseer and (if married) his wife and offers helpful suggestions to assist them with their work. From time to time, the branch office will outline points to be discussed at this meeting. The circuit overseer and his wife may have matters with which they desire assistance. (Prov. 20:5) The district overseer may have points to share based on things he has learned through experience and observation. Privately, the circuit overseer will discuss the needs of the circuit with the district overseer, who may decide to work



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some of these points into his talks on the circuit assembly program.

During the first part of the week with the host congregation, usually on Tuesday evening, the district overseer will attend an abbreviated Congregation Book Study and give a talk to the congregation. If the elders need advice or assistance with some congregation matters, they will let him know this in advance, and he will meet with them. Primarily, he will take the lead in group witnessing during the week. He and his wife will have a full schedule of field service. The circuit overseer and his wife will also give full support to the field service activity that week. The presiding overseer will make sure that all are informed of the arrangements for meetings for service. He will also see that adequate territory is available and make appointments on behalf of any who have requested to work with the traveling overseers.

At the conclusion of the circuit assembly (or assemblies), the district overseer will send the branch office a report on how the program was presented and received in that circuit. He will report on the spiritual condition and the needs of the circuit. Once a month, he also reports his field service and expenses. His accommodations and expenses are cared for in the same way as for the circuit overseer.

**BRANCH COMMITTEE**

In each branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the world, three or more spiritually qualified and mature brothers serve as a Branch Committee to oversee the preaching work in the country or countries under their jurisdiction. One of the committee members serves as the Branch Committee coordinator.



Those serving on the Branch Committee handle matters pertaining to all the congregations in their territory. They arrange for the distribution of publications furnished by “the faithful and discreet slave” to strengthen all associated with the congregations. (Matt. 24:45) Their primary objective is to see to it that the good news of the Kingdom is preached throughout the territory assigned and that congregations, circuits, and districts are set up to give proper oversight to the needs of the field. The Branch Committee also gives attention to the missionary field and to special, regular, and auxiliary pioneer activity. When there are assemblies and conventions, these brothers make arrangements and assignments to ensure that “all things take place decently and by arrangement.”—1 Cor. 14:40.

A Country Committee is appointed in some lands that come under the oversight of a Branch Committee in another land. This allows for closer supervision of the work where the Country Committee serves. It cares for matters in the Bethel Home and office, handles correspondence and reports, and generally cares for the activities in the field. The Country Committee cooperates with the Branch Committee for the advancement of the Kingdom.

The Governing Body makes all appointments of those selected to serve as members of Branch Committees and Country Committees.

### **ZONE OVERSEER**

Periodically, arrangements are made by the Governing Body to have qualified brothers visit each of the branches throughout the earth. Brothers serving in this capacity are known as zone overseers.



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Their primary work is to help the Branch Committee with problems or questions they may have in carrying on the preaching and disciple-making work. Wherever practical, the zone overseer also meets with the missionaries who work under the branches he visits. He talks with them about their problems and needs, giving necessary encouragement regarding their most important activity, Kingdom preaching and disciple making.

The zone overseer also examines the various records that are kept for operating a branch office. He is especially interested in what is being accomplished in the field as far as the Kingdom preaching and other congregation activities are concerned. If there is a printery, farm, or other facility, he inspects each of these operations. When the zone overseer visits branches, he also shares to the extent possible in the Kingdom-preaching work.

**LOVING OVERSIGHT**

Visits by traveling overseers provide an interchange of encouragement, and the congregations are thus made firm in the faith. (Rom. 1:12; Eph. 4:3) The publishers are made aware of their interdependency. They work for the common good of all and cooperate in spreading the Kingdom good news. (1 Cor. 12:12-31) Certainly we have benefited greatly from the hard work and loving care of mature Christian men. We will benefit even further as we continue submitting ourselves to congregation elders and other appointed overseers charged with shepherding the flock and overseeing the work. (1 Cor. 16:15-18; Phil. 2:25, 29) As we do this, we are drawn into unity with the Head of the congregation, Christ Jesus,



our Lord, the one appointed by Jehovah as the Fine Shepherd. (Eph. 1:22, 23) As a result, God's spirit permeates the congregations worldwide, and God's Word serves to guide the work throughout the earth. —Ps. 119:105.

## CHAPTER 6

### MINISTERIAL SERVANTS RENDER VALUABLE SERVICE

**T**O THE congregation at Philippi, the apostle Paul wrote: "Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the holy ones in union with Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, along with overseers and ministerial servants." (Phil. 1:1) Note that in his salutation, he made mention of the ministerial servants. These men evidently fulfilled an important role in assisting the elders in the congregation back then. The same is true in our time. Ministerial servants render a number of services that help the overseers and that contribute to the good order of the congregation.

Have you become acquainted with the ministerial servants in your congregation? Are you aware of the many fine services they perform for your benefit and for the benefit of the entire congregation? The apostle specifically mentions them and states: "The men who minister in a fine manner are acquiring for themselves a fine standing and great freeness of speech in the faith in connection with Christ Jesus." —1 Tim. 3:13.

### SCRIPTURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MINISTERIAL SERVANTS

Ministerial servants are expected to lead a wholesome Christian life, be responsible men, and give



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proof that they are able to care for assignments properly. This becomes obvious when we consider what Paul had to say in his letter to Timothy about the qualifications of ministerial servants: “Ministerial servants should likewise be serious, not double-tongued, not giving themselves to a lot of wine, not greedy of dishonest gain, holding the sacred secret of the faith with a clean conscience. Also, let these be tested as to fitness first, then let them serve as ministers, as they are free from accusation. Let ministerial servants be husbands of one wife, presiding in a fine manner over children and their own households. For the men who minister in a fine manner are acquiring for themselves a fine standing and great freeness of speech in the faith in connection with Christ Jesus.”—1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12, 13.

The work of ministerial servants generally involves nonteaching responsibilities. By their hard work and exemplary Christian life, they not only perform vital services for the congregation but also set an example to be imitated by others.—1 Tim. 4:11, 12.

The specific Scriptural requirements for ministerial servants mentioned by Paul in his first letter to Timothy indicate that a high standard is set for men who are used in this capacity. Holding to such a standard serves to protect the congregation from any legitimate accusation as to the kind of men to whom it entrusts special responsibilities. Whether younger or older in years, ministerial servants are expected to be active in the ministry each month, setting a fine example. They should be exemplary in their dress, grooming, speech, attitude, and conduct. Such a pattern of living with soundness of mind gains the respect of others and reflects the seriousness with which ministerial servants view their relationship



with Jehovah and their privileges of service in the congregation.—Titus 2:2, 6-8.

These are men who have been “tested as to fitness.” Even before receiving their appointment, they proved to be truly dedicated men, whose faith has been made manifest in carrying on zealous Kingdom service and in helping others to be made firm in the faith. In their response to the good news, they have demonstrated that they put Kingdom interests first in their life and are reaching out for whatever service privileges may be open to them. They are indeed examples for others in the congregation to imitate.—1 Tim. 3:10.

### HOW THEY SERVE

Ministerial servants render a variety of practical services in behalf of their brothers and sisters. In doing so, they are helpful to the overseers, relieving them of detailed work, thus leaving them free to care for teaching and shepherding responsibilities. In making the service assignments, the elders take into account the number of appointed ministerial servants in the congregation as well as their individual abilities.

Just consider some of the services they perform. One ministerial servant may be assigned to take care of the congregation literature, making it convenient for us to obtain the literature we need for our personal use and for the field ministry. Another may care for the magazines. Others are assigned to keep records, such as for congregation accounts or for territory, or they are assigned to handle microphones, to operate sound equipment, to look after the platform, or perhaps to help the elders in other ways. There is much work to be done in maintaining the Kingdom



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Hall and keeping it clean, so ministerial servants are often called upon to assist in caring for these responsibilities. Ministerial servants are also assigned to serve as attendants, to welcome new ones, and to help maintain order at congregation meetings.

In some congregations, there may be enough ministerial servants for a different one to be assigned to each of these duties. Elsewhere, a ministerial servant may care for several assignments. In some instances, it is beneficial to have more than one person assigned to do certain work. If there are not enough ministerial servants to care for some of these responsibilities, the body of elders may arrange for other exemplary baptized brothers to care for some of this necessary work. Thus they would gain experience that would be useful later when they, in turn, become qualified to be appointed as ministerial servants. Or if brothers are not available, certain sisters who show godly humility and devotion to Jehovah could be asked to assist with some things even though, of course, they would not be appointed as ministerial servants.

Periodically, if there is good reason, elders may find it beneficial to change some assignments from one ministerial servant to another. However, there is great advantage in having brothers continue to handle the same assignments in order to become more proficient and to gain experience. How the elders work out these assignments handled by ministerial servants would be according to the congregation's needs.

Depending on local circumstances, there may be other services that can be assigned to ministerial servants who are doing as the apostle Paul encouraged young Timothy, 'making their spiritual



advancement manifest.' (1 Tim. 4:15) If there are not enough elders to conduct the Congregation Book Studies, some of the more qualified ministerial servants may be used as Congregation Book Study servants to care for assigned groups. They may be assigned to handle parts in the Service Meeting and on the Theocratic Ministry School and to deliver public talks in the local congregation. Other privileges may be extended to some of the ministerial servants when there is a particular need and if they meet the requirements for the assignment.—1 Pet. 4:10.

In assisting the elders, ministerial servants should give of themselves willingly, demonstrating that they have a sense of responsibility and are working for the advancement of Kingdom interests and for the benefit of everyone in the congregation. By taking the lead in the field service, ministerial servants can set a good example for others and reap great satisfaction themselves in a work well-done.

Though their work differs from that of the elders, it is no less a part of sacred service to God and is important to the smooth functioning of the congregation. In time, if ministerial servants discharge their obligations well and also become qualified to serve as shepherds and teachers, they may be recommended to serve as elders.

If you have not done so already, why not make a special effort to get acquainted with the ministerial servants in your congregation? You can show your appreciation for their hard work by cooperating with them as they care for their assigned duties. In this way, you will also be showing appreciation for Jehovah's provision for maintaining an orderly household. (Gal. 6:10) The ministerial servants are appointed by holy spirit for your good.



## CHAPTER 7

### MEETINGS THAT “INCITE TO LOVE AND FINE WORKS”

**H**OW fitting that arrangements are made for Christians to meet regularly for worship and to be fed spiritually! It is important for all of us to gather together to hear God’s Word so as to learn his requirements and how we may serve him. This applies to both younger and older ones, just as it did in the case of God’s ancient covenant people, the nation of Israel. Regarding every seventh Festival of Booths, Jehovah commanded the nation through Moses: “Congregate the people, the men and the women and the little ones and your alien resident who is within your gates, in order that they may listen and in order that they may learn, as they must fear Jehovah your God and take care to carry out all the words of this law.”—Deut. 31:12.

Clearly, the purpose for meeting together now, even as it was then, is to listen and to learn and to be “taught by Jehovah.” (Isa. 54:13) Assembling for worship in ancient Israel was always a joyous occasion, as reflected in the words of David, who wrote: “I rejoiced when they were saying to me: ‘To the house of Jehovah let us go.’” (Ps. 122:1) The apostle Paul referred to an additional cause for joy when meeting with fellow worshipers. He wrote: “Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works.” (Heb. 10:24) Congregation meetings provided early Christians with the opportunity to get to know one another, to impart encouragement, and to gain strength through association. This is also true of Jehovah’s Witnesses today as they meet together to worship Jehovah.



**CONGREGATION MEETINGS**

The Bible emphasizes the value of coming together to worship and praise Jehovah. (Ps. 26:8, 12; Matt. 18:20) Those who embraced the truth at Pentecost 33 C.E. did not treat this matter lightly. They continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles, and "day after day they were in constant attendance at the temple with one accord." (Acts 2:42, 46) Later when Christians came together for worship, they read from inspired writings, including letters written by the apostles and other Christian disciples. (1 Cor. 1:1, 2; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 1:1; Jas. 1:1) There was congregation prayer. (Acts 4:24-29; 20:36) At times, experiences from the missionary field were related. (Acts 11:5-18; 14:27, 28) Bible doctrines and the fulfillment of inspired prophecies were considered. Instruction was given in matters of approved Christian conduct and godly devotion. All were encouraged to be zealous proclaimers of the good news.—Rom. 10:9, 10; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; 15:58; Eph. 5:1-33.

In our day Christian meetings in many respects follow the pattern set in apostolic days. We heed the inspired exhortation found at Hebrews 10:25 by "not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as [we] behold the day drawing near." During the difficult last days of this wicked system of things, we need the added encouragement that comes from regularly meeting together in order to maintain spiritual strength and Christian integrity. (Rom. 1:11, 12) As in Paul's day, Christians today live among a crooked and twisted generation. We have repudiated the ungodliness and worldly spirit of this system of things. (Phil. 2:



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15, 16; Titus 2:12-14) Really, where would we rather be than in association with Jehovah’s people? (Ps. 84:10) And what could be more beneficial than hearing the Word of God discussed?

Jehovah is the Source of an abundance of satisfying spiritual food. (Ps. 145:14, 15) Through his Son and “the faithful and discreet slave,” food at the proper time is being dispensed. (Matt. 24:45) How is such provision served to the individual members of the organization? One means is through the various meetings held each week in the congregation. Consider these meetings and the benefits derived as we regularly ‘incite one another to love and fine works.’

### THE WATCHTOWER STUDY

*The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah’s Kingdom* is the principal means to keep Jehovah’s people well supplied with timely spiritual food. Certain articles published in *The Watchtower* are specifically prepared for weekly congregation study, with special instruction based on the written Word of God. Information carefully examined in the *Watchtower* Study stirs the hearts and minds of members of the congregation and builds up their spiritual strength.

The study articles are varied as to subject matter. The material frequently deals with the application of Bible principles in daily living and fortifies Christians against “the spirit of the world” and unclean conduct. (1 Cor. 2:12) Through the columns of *The Watchtower* come increased light on Bible doctrine and the discussion of fulfillment of prophecy as Jehovah makes this known, thus enabling all to keep abreast of the truth and stay on the path of the righteous ones. (Ps. 97:11; Prov. 4:18) Attending the *Watchtower* Study and participating in it can help us



to rejoice in the hope of Jehovah's righteous new system of things. (Rom. 12:12; 2 Pet. 3:13) It helps us to manifest the fruitage of the spirit in our life and to keep strong our desire to serve Jehovah zealously. (Gal. 5:22, 23) It helps to strengthen our faith to endure trials and to build "a fine foundation for the future" so that we "may get a firm hold on the real life."—1 Tim. 6:19; 1 Pet. 1:6, 7.

It is evident that the material considered week by week at the *Watchtower* Study is vital. It helps us to grow spiritually, to make the truth of God's Word our own, to bring our life into harmony with the teachings of the Bible, and to be united spiritually with our brothers worldwide. What can each one do to take full advantage of this provision for spiritual feeding? Prepare the lesson in advance, looking up all cited scriptures, and have a share in commenting during the meeting. Such participation will cause the points under discussion to make a deeper impression, sounding down the truth into our heart. At the same time, others benefit as they hear our expressions of faith and hope. Carefully listening to their comments will ensure that we get the most benefit from the lesson each week.

The *Watchtower* Study helps us to maintain spiritual strength and firmness in the faith. It should not be looked upon as just routine. None should miss this important provision that Jehovah has made for strengthening all associated with the household of faith.

### **PUBLIC MEETING**

The Public Meeting is usually held in conjunction with the weekly *Watchtower* Study, but it differs as to the method used in presenting information.



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Whereas the *Watchtower* Study is developed as a question-and-answer discussion with audience participation, the Public Meeting features a discourse on a Bible subject. Such meetings play an important part in filling the spiritual needs of both new ones and members of the congregation.—Acts 18:4; 19:9, 10.

By inviting interested ones as well as the public in general, we may accomplish much in acquainting people with basic Bible information. The Public Meeting helps one and all to remain alert to Christian teachings and encourages steadfastness in Kingdom service.

The subjects considered at the Public Meeting are varied. Talks cover Bible doctrine and prophecy as well as Scriptural principles and counsel regarding family life, marital matters, situations confronting youths, and Christian morals. Some talks center on Jehovah’s marvelous works of creation. Others highlight the exemplary faith, courage, and integrity of different Bible characters, focusing on lessons for our day. The Public Meeting is truly an occasion for taking in informative and refreshing spiritual food.

If we are to get the full benefit of the Public Meeting arrangement, it is essential that we attend regularly, pay close attention, look up the scriptures referred to by the speaker, and follow along as he reads and explains them. (Luke 8:18) This will help us to become more familiar with the location of Bible books and will increase our knowledge of the Scriptures. As we thus make sure of the things discussed, we should be determined to hold fast to what we learn and to apply it personally.—1 Thess. 5:21.



If there are a sufficient number of speakers available, the congregation will no doubt have a public talk every week. Frequently, this is made possible by having speakers visit from nearby congregations. If there is a shortage of speakers in an area, arrangements are made to have these talks as often as possible.

Christ Jesus, his apostles, and their associates conducted public meetings similar to those enjoyed today by congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. Without question, Jesus was the greatest public speaker ever on earth. It was said concerning him: "Never has another man spoken like this." (John 7:46) Jesus spoke with authority, astounding his audiences. (Matt. 7:28, 29) Many were the benefits received by those who took his message to heart. (Matt. 13:16, 17) The apostles followed his example. At Acts 2:22-36, we read of Peter's powerful discourse on the day of Pentecost 33 C.E. Many were motivated to act as a result of what they heard. Later, individuals benefited from Paul's discourse in Athens. (Acts 17:22-34) Similarly, in our day millions have received benefits through the weekly Public Meetings held in congregations as well as public talks presented at circuit assemblies and at district, national, and international conventions. We should give full support to the arrangement for Public Meetings.

### **SERVICE MEETING**

The Service Meeting focuses on our field ministry. It equips us to have a full share in preaching the Kingdom good news, making disciples, and declaring the approaching execution of divine judgment. (Matt. 28:20; Mark 13:10; 2 Pet. 3:7) To a large extent, this work is done by speaking to people indi-



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vidually and providing them with Bible literature. But the application of Jehovah’s righteous principles in our life has a direct bearing on the effectiveness of our field ministry and the fruitage that we produce. (Matt. 13:23; John 15:8) We thereby demonstrate the good results that come from applying the Scriptures. Appropriately, the Service Meeting gives attention to all these facets of our service to God.

Each month *Our Kingdom Ministry* outlines the weekly Service Meetings. You will receive a copy through the congregation. When a new issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry* is received, the presiding overseer carefully analyzes what it contains and assigns the various meeting parts to qualified brothers. He may arrange for such assignments to be made through one of the other elders.

Elders and well-qualified ministerial servants are assigned to handle the various parts on the Service Meeting program. They should be careful, not to introduce additional material, but to develop the program parts as outlined in *Our Kingdom Ministry*. This means that they need to study the assigned material carefully to determine what the principal points of instruction are and how to handle them so that the brothers will understand and remember them. Careful thought is also given to application of the material to the situation of the local congregation.

While there are various ways that material can effectively be presented, in no case should the method of presentation overshadow the material presented. Demonstrations should not be dramatic productions with a lot of stage props. Use natural settings, such



as a scene at one's secular work, a door-to-door call, a home Bible study, or a family discussion. Settings should fit what is encountered locally so that the publishers can relate to them.

Exemplary baptized publishers and their well-trained minor children may be asked to participate in certain parts, such as demonstrations. They may be interviewed or invited to relate their experiences. If you have an opportunity to participate, cooperate joyfully and conscientiously, recognizing that this is part of your service to Jehovah.

It should be the heartfelt desire of each Christian to live in a way that encourages others to follow Jesus Christ as dedicated Witnesses of Jehovah. To that end, Service Meeting programs are designed to reach the following objectives: (1) to encourage us to participate in the public ministry to the fullest extent possible—whether witnessing from house to house, on the street, or wherever people may be found—and to improve in our presentation of the good news; (2) to teach us how to make return visits on individuals who show interest or accept Bible literature; (3) to motivate us to set aside time for regularly conducting home Bible studies and directing students to the organization; (4) to give us ideas on how to witness informally; (5) to show us how to improve in our efforts to help new ones, our children, and other young people to become dedicated disciples.

You will benefit if before the meeting, you go over the program outlined in *Our Kingdom Ministry*. At times, articles in various publications of Jehovah's Witnesses are considered. Not only will advance re-



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search be informative but such research will also equip you to have a share when parts on the program call for audience participation. The more you absorb from the Service Meeting, the more effective you will be in your ministry.

When all in the congregation attend the Service Meeting regularly, unified activity is the result. Since every baptized Witness is a minister, attending this meeting is essential to help us carry out our commission. It is also very beneficial for anyone who desires to become a dedicated servant of God. Make attendance at this meeting part of your weekly schedule of activity.

Meetings of this sort are nothing new. They are based on sound Scriptural precedent. Before sending his disciples out to preach, Jesus gave them detailed instructions on what to say and do. (Matt. 10:5–11:1; Luke 10:1-16) Later his disciples continued to have such meetings at which they discussed their experiences in the ministry, and this strengthened them for zealous Kingdom activity. (Acts 4:23-31) We continue that same practice today.

## THEOCRATIC MINISTRY SCHOOL

The Theocratic Ministry School is an ongoing provision for the education of all in the congregation. The curriculum includes Bible readings, Bible talks, student presentations, and other training for the field ministry. Counsel is given to students to help them progressively improve in their presentations. While offering a variety of information that is of interest and benefit to the entire congregation, the Theocratic Ministry School also gives participants as well as those in the audience opportunity to improve various aspects of their personal



ministry. Occasional reviews provide a means of self-examination regarding individual progress in ministerial training.

Each year Jehovah's organization provides a Theocratic Ministry School Schedule setting out the program to be followed. This schedule outlines the material to be used and how the assignments are to be handled. For many years the Theocratic Ministry School has proved its worth in training Jehovah's Witnesses to be effective proclaimers of the Kingdom. All who are actively associated with the congregation, including people newly attending the meetings, may enroll as long as they agree with the teachings of the Bible and their life is in harmony with Christian principles.

By enrolling in the Theocratic Ministry School, we show that we are interested in spiritual advancement. The instruction there can help us to demonstrate "fine works" as public praisers of Jehovah. (Matt. 5:16) It can equip us to accomplish more in the time we have available for the field service and to incite others to action by our fine comments at the congregation meetings. In the case of brothers, this instruction will greatly assist them in qualifying as ministerial servants or elders and eventually in handling major Service Meeting parts and in giving public talks.

Those enrolled will be notified well in advance concerning their student assignments so that they can prepare thoroughly. When we have a part in the school, it is particularly important to be on hand before the meeting starts. We should make every effort to be present to fulfill our assignment. However, if on occasion an emergency arises and it is impossible for us to care for our part, we should im-



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mediately notify the school overseer or the brother assigned to assist him so that arrangements can be made for a substitute.

As a regular part of our spiritual feeding program, the Theocratic Ministry School provides many benefits. The prophet Isaiah said: “The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself has given me the tongue of the taught ones, that I may know how to answer the tired one with a word.” (Isa. 50:4) Unquestionably, the school has played an important part in training millions to develop the tongue of one taught by Jehovah. Over the years, this program has helped those enrolled to make spiritual advancement and to learn how better to express themselves in presenting the good news of the Kingdom. Under the direction of holy spirit, such training has enabled God’s people to give an answer to everyone demanding a reason for their hope. Being taught to use God’s Word in this way is a blessing.

Those enrolled in the Theocratic Ministry School can benefit greatly from the use of the Kingdom Hall library. The library should contain the available publications of Jehovah’s Witnesses, *Watch Tower Publications Indexes*, perhaps a number of Bible translations, a concordance, and other helpful reference works. We should feel free to use any of these publications at the Kingdom Hall before or after the meetings.

## CONGREGATION BOOK STUDY

Members of the congregation and others who are associated derive great personal benefit from the Congregation Book Study, a meeting generally conducted with a smaller group than at the other meetings. A few families and a small number



of other individuals gather at each of these studies. Study groups meet in convenient locations scattered throughout the congregation territory, usually private homes. The Kingdom Hall may also be used for this purpose.

In some respects, these group studies provide benefits that do not directly come through other provisions of the congregation. Why is this so? It is because the Congregation Book Study arrangement provides not only for making a careful and detailed study of Bible subjects but also for giving more personal attention to the spiritual growth of each individual in these small groups. Such personal assistance may include appropriate Scriptural counsel, encouragement and direction for carrying out the ministry, as well as other vital spiritual help to fit the needs of the individual. This assistance is a reflection of Jehovah's loving-kindness and his tender care for his people.—Isa. 40:11.

The Congregation Book Study overseer is a student of God's Word and is qualified to help others to increase in Bible knowledge and to apply this knowledge in practical ways. Besides conducting the lesson, he shows personal interest in the physical and spiritual well-being of all in the group, assists them in the preaching work, and makes shepherding calls on them and on others in the congregation as the need arises. A capable ministerial servant may conduct the book study if an elder is not available.

This meeting is a group study using the Bible and a textbook provided by Jehovah's Witnesses. Basically, it is conducted in the same manner as the *Watchtower* Study. The book study is opened and closed with prayer, paragraphs are read, questions are asked on the paragraphs, comments are given,



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and scriptures are read as time permits. To impress principal thoughts on the mind of each one, the conductor may include a brief oral review at the end of the study. As we attend week by week, we will gain both knowledge and understanding. We will learn the reasons for statements that are made in the publication and how to support them from the Bible as well as how to conduct discussions of the same material with others whom we are able to help in our field ministry. (2 Tim. 2:15) This meeting will do much to equip us to become better teachers of God’s Word.

In a small group such as this, there are more opportunities for us to offer comments. Thus, all of us, including new ones, have the opportunity to get accustomed to making a public declaration of our faith before others. (Heb. 13:15) It is good to learn to comment in our own words instead of reading out of the book.

Whereas anyone present may share in the reading of the scriptures, just one person is assigned to read the paragraphs. The Congregation Book Study overseer will arrange in advance for a baptized brother who is a good reader to read the paragraphs. Each week, a different qualified brother may be assigned to read the paragraphs. If no capable brother is available, the overseer himself may read or a capable sister may read.

Having the study groups scattered throughout the congregation territory makes it convenient both for us and for newly interested people in the neighborhood to attend. We should make every effort to bring others with us to the meeting so that they can get a taste of the spiritually upbuilding discussions and the warm association that we enjoy.



In addition to being a place for group study, the Congregation Book Study location may be a meeting place for field service. Here the group may meet at convenient times before going out into the field. By cooperating in all these arrangements, book study groups work together for the twofold purpose of study and service.

### **MEETINGS FOR FIELD SERVICE**

At various times during the week, groups of Jehovah's Witnesses may briefly assemble in preparation for going out in the field ministry. Discussion of a Bible text—preferably the daily text if it is field service related—suggestions for dealing with situations likely to be encountered in the field, or points from *Our Kingdom Ministry* are usually considered at these meetings. Field service arrangements are made, and one of the group leads in prayer. The group is then ready to go into the field. Such meetings provide practical instruction and real encouragement for those going out in the witness work. Arrangements can be made at this meeting to help newer ones or others who may need assistance in the preaching work. Such meetings last from 10 to 15 minutes.

### **MEETING ARRANGEMENTS AT NEW OR SMALL CONGREGATIONS**

As more become disciples, the number of congregations also increases. Whether a new congregation is formed from an already existing congregation or is made up of publishers in an isolated area, it must consist of baptized publishers and others who recognize the faithful and discreet slave class and desire to work under its direction. The circuit overseer usually submits the application for a new congrega-



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tion. In some cases, small groups may find it more advantageous to be associated with the nearest congregation.

At times, small congregations may be composed entirely of sisters. When such is the case, a sister who prays in the congregation or conducts meetings does so with her head properly covered, in harmony with the Scriptural arrangement. (1 Cor. 11:3-16) In most cases, they remain seated, facing the group. None of the sisters give actual discourses at meetings. They read and comment on the material provided by Jehovah’s Witnesses, or for variety, they may cover it in discussions or demonstrations.

In a newly formed congregation, brothers who qualify for appointment as elders or ministerial servants will be recommended to the branch office. If no one qualifies, as in the case of a group made up entirely of sisters, the branch office will designate one of the sisters to care for correspondence with the office and to carry on meetings. In time, when brothers qualify for appointment, they will care for these responsibilities.

## SPECIAL ASSEMBLY DAYS AND CIRCUIT ASSEMBLIES

Meetings of Jehovah’s servants may range in size from small gatherings of just two or three individuals to large assemblies of many thousands. Each year arrangements are made for congregations assigned to the same circuit to assemble together for a one-day special assembly day and a two-day circuit assembly. These joyous occasions afford everyone opportunities to “widen out” in Christian association. (2 Cor. 6:11-13) With a special need in mind, “the faithful and discreet slave” prepares the Scriptural themes and various parts of these programs.



The information is presented by means of a variety of methods, such as discourses, discussions, demonstrations, reenactments, and interviews. The programs usually feature parts that deal with local situations or counsel that specifically applies to the particular circuit. Such timely instruction builds up all who attend.

At special assembly days and circuit assemblies, opportunity is provided for new disciples to get baptized in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah. All are encouraged by the reports and experiences related concerning the work of preaching the good news.

### **DISTRICT CONVENTIONS**

Once each year, larger gatherings are held by Jehovah's Witnesses. These are usually organized as three-day district conventions, combining congregations from a number of circuits. However, smaller branches may find it more practical and convenient for all congregations under the branch to assemble in one place. Arrangements for these gatherings in some lands may vary according to circumstances or on the basis of direction from the Governing Body. National conventions are also organized. Periodically, international conventions around the world may be attended by tens of thousands of Witnesses from a number of different lands. Over the years, many people have learned about the good news because of the publicity given to these large gatherings of Jehovah's Witnesses.

District, national, and international conventions are joyous occasions of united worship for Jehovah's dedicated people. Such conventions have provided the setting for revealing increased light on the



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truth, for releasing new publications for personal and congregational study and use in the field ministry, and for having baptisms. Jehovah’s Witnesses consider district conventions to be of particular importance in promoting spiritual growth and in reviewing progress in fulfilling the Christian commission to preach the good news. In some smaller branches, the district convention may actually be a national convention. The larger conventions give evidence that Jehovah’s people indeed form an international brotherhood of dedicated Christians bearing the identifying mark of disciples of Jesus Christ.—John 13:35.

By attending local congregation meetings as well as the larger assemblies and conventions of Jehovah’s people, we are strengthened to do Jehovah’s will and are protected against worldly influences that could undermine our Christian faith. We can all be thankful that Jehovah has provided these periods of spiritual refreshment for his dedicated people in this time of the end.

## THE LORD’S EVENING MEAL

Once each year on the anniversary of the death of Jesus Christ, all congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses observe the Memorial of Christ’s death, or the Lord’s Evening Meal. (1 Cor. 11:20, 23, 24) This is the most important meeting of the year for Jehovah’s people. We are specifically commanded to observe this Memorial.—Luke 22:19.

The date of the Memorial corresponds with the date of the Passover, which is clearly marked in the Bible. (Ex. 12:2, 6; Matt. 26:17, 20, 26) The Passover was the annual commemoration of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt in the year 1513 B.C.E. At



that time Jehovah marked the 14th day of their first lunar month as the date for them to eat the Pass-over lamb and to leave their captivity in Egypt. (Ex. 12:1-51) The date is determined by counting 14 days from the new moon nearest the spring equinox as visible in Jerusalem. Generally, the Memorial observance each year falls on the date of the first full moon following the spring equinox.

Matthew 26:26-28 outlines in Jesus' own words the way the Memorial is observed. It is, not a ritual with mystical overtones, but a symbolic meal that is shared by those who have been called to be joint heirs with Jesus Christ in his heavenly Kingdom. (Luke 22:28-30) All other dedicated Christians and interested people are encouraged to attend the Lord's Evening Meal as observers. By their attendance they show their appreciation for the provision Jehovah God has made for the benefit of all mankind through his Son, Jesus Christ. Jehovah's Witnesses view the Memorial as a special event and make every effort to be in attendance each year.

In the first part of the year, usually near Memorial time, a special public talk is given in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. They endeavor to invite all interested ones to attend. The talk provides a timely message for those who want to be pleasing to God and is designed to stimulate further interest in Bible study.

Jehovah's Witnesses joyfully anticipate occasions for assembling together at meetings, where we "consider one another to incite to love and fine works." (Heb. 10:24) "The faithful and discreet slave" is alert to provide such meetings according to our spiritual needs. All of Jehovah's servants as well as interested people are urged to take full ad-



vantage of the arrangements for regularly assembling together. By showing due appreciation for Jehovah's provisions through his organization, God's servants are bound together in unity.

## CHAPTER 8

### MINISTERS OF THE GOOD NEWS

**I**N SENDING forth his Son, Jehovah gave us a perfect model to follow. (1 Pet. 2:21) When anyone becomes his follower, Jesus helps that person to preach the good news as one of God's ministers. Indicating that this would be spiritually refreshing, Jesus said: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and *learn from me* ["become my disciples," ftn.], for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls." (Matt. 11:28, 29) His promise has not failed any who have responded to that invitation!

As God's Chief Minister, Jesus called certain individuals to come and be his followers. (Matt. 9:9; John 1:43) He trained them in the ministry and sent them forth to do the same work he was doing. (Matt. 10:1-11:1; 20:28; Luke 4:43) Later he sent forth 70 others to share in declaring the good news concerning God's Kingdom. (Luke 10:1, 8-11) When Jesus sent his disciples forth, he said to them: "He that listens to you listens to me too. And he that disregards you disregards me too. Moreover, he that disregards me disregards also him that sent me forth." (Luke 10:16) In this way Jesus stressed the serious responsibility that was laid upon the disciples. They were to represent the Most High God! It would be the same with all



others who respond to Jesus' invitation to "come be [his] follower," even down to this day. (Luke 18:22) All who respond have a divine commission to preach the good news of the Kingdom and to make disciples. —Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20.

Having come to Jesus, therefore, in response to his invitation to follow him, we have been blessed with knowledge of Jehovah God and of Jesus Christ. (John 17:3) We have been taught Jehovah's ways. With his help we have been able to make our mind over, change our personality, and harmonize our daily conduct with Jehovah's righteous standards. (Rom. 12:1, 2; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9, 10) Our heartfelt appreciation has moved us to dedicate ourselves to Jehovah and to symbolize that by baptism in water. Baptism constitutes our ordination as ministers.

Always keep in mind that service to God must be rendered with clean hands and out of a pure heart. (Ps. 24:3, 4; Isa. 52:11; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1) Through faith in Jesus Christ, we have gained a clean conscience and freeness of speech. (Heb. 10:19-23, 35, 36; Rev. 7:9, 10, 14) The apostle Paul admonished Christians to do all things for God's glory, so as not to be stumbling others. Also, the apostle Peter pointed out the value of exemplary godly conduct in winning unbelievers over to the truth. (1 Cor. 10:31, 33; 1 Pet. 3:1) How can you help someone qualify to become a minister of the good news?

### NEW PUBLISHERS

From the time you begin conducting a home Bible study with an interested person, encourage him to speak to others about what he is learning from the Bible. He could be urged to speak with relatives, friends, work associates, and others on an informal



basis. This is an important step in teaching new ones to be followers of Jesus Christ as ministers of the good news. (Matt. 9:9; Luke 6:40) As the new one grows spiritually and becomes adept at informal witnessing, he will no doubt express a desire to have a share in the public ministry with the congregation.

### **MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS**

Before inviting a person to accompany you in the field ministry for the first time and before you suggest that he report any field service to the congregation, there are certain qualifications he should meet. When a person accompanies us in the field ministry, he identifies himself publicly with the congregation of Jehovah's people, so it is understood that he has already brought his life into harmony with Jehovah's righteous standards and can be an unbaptized publisher in the congregation.

Very likely, as you study with a person and discuss Bible principles with him, you will become aware of his circumstances. You may observe that he is living in harmony with the information he has learned from studying the Bible. But there are some aspects of the student's life that the elders will want to discuss with him and you together before you invite him to accompany you in the field service and to share in publicly witnessing to others.

The presiding overseer will arrange to have two elders (one being a member of the Congregation Service Committee) discuss this matter with you and the Bible student. They will consider the following points:

- Do the person's expressions show that he believes that the Bible is the inspired Word of God? (2 Tim. 3:16)



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- Does he know and believe the basic teachings of the Scriptures so that when asked questions, he will answer in harmony with the Bible and not according to false religious teachings or his own ideas? (Matt. 7:21-23; 2 Tim. 2:15)
- Is he heeding the Bible's command to associate with Jehovah's people at congregation meetings if he physically and circumstantially can? (Ps. 122:1; Heb. 10:24, 25)
- Does he know what the Bible teaches about fornication, adultery, polygamy, and homosexuality, and is he living in harmony with such teachings? If the person is living with one of the opposite sex, are they properly married? (Matt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Heb. 13:4)
- Does he heed the Bible's prohibition of drunkenness? (Eph. 5:18; 1 Pet. 4:3, 4) Is he free from all nonmedical use of addictive or mind-altering natural or synthetic substances? (2 Cor. 7:1)
- Does he see the value of avoiding unwholesome association? (1 Cor. 15:33)
- Has he definitely broken off membership in all false religious organizations with which he may have been affiliated, and has he ceased attending their meetings and supporting or sharing in their activities? (2 Cor. 6:14-18; Rev. 18:4)
- Is he free from all involvement in the political affairs of the world? (John 6:15; 15:19; Jas. 1:27)
- Does he believe and live in harmony with what the Bible says at Isaiah 2:4 about the affairs of the nations?
- Does he really want to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses? (Ps. 110:3)

If the elders are not sure how the student feels about some of these matters, they should invite him to look up the scriptures here cited and comment on



them in order to see the significance of what they say. It is important that he understand that those who share with Jehovah's Witnesses in their preaching activity must be leading a life that harmonizes with these Scriptural requirements. His expressions will help the elders determine whether he knows what is expected of him and whether he is qualified to a reasonable degree to begin participating in the field ministry.

If he is qualified, the elders can warmly welcome the individual as one who desires to become an active associate of Jehovah's Witnesses. (Rom. 15:7) He should be encouraged to begin sharing in the field ministry as soon as possible and to turn in a field service report at the end of the month. The elders can explain that when a Bible student qualifies as an unbaptized publisher and reports field service for the first time, a *Congregation's Publisher Record* card is made out in his name and included in the congregation file. They can assure him that all the elders take an interest in the field service reports that are turned in each month.

Getting better acquainted with the new publisher and showing a personal interest in what he has accomplished can have a fine influence on the individual. It may move him to make even greater efforts to serve Jehovah and to turn in field service reports regularly each month.—Phil. 2:4; Heb. 13:2.

Once the elders determine that the Bible student qualifies to engage in the field ministry, he is eligible to receive his own copy of *Organized to Do Jehovah's Will*. After he reports field service for the first time, a brief announcement should be made to the congregation that he is a new unbaptized publisher.



**HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE**

Young children may also qualify as publishers of the good news. Jesus received young children to himself and blessed them. (Matt. 19:13-15; 21:15, 16) Although primarily parents are responsible for their own children, others in the congregation may wish to help young ones who are motivated from the heart to share in the Kingdom-preaching work. If you are a parent, your fine example in the field ministry will do much to encourage your children to be zealous in their service to God. When a child is exemplary in his conduct and is moved from the heart to make a personal expression of his faith by speaking to others about the good news, what further help can be given?

It would be appropriate for the parent to approach one of the elders on the Congregation Service Committee to discuss whether the child is qualified to become a publisher. The presiding overseer will arrange to have two elders (one being a member of the Congregation Service Committee) meet with the child and his parent(s). If the child has a basic knowledge of Bible truth and gives evidence of *wanting* to share in Kingdom service, this would indicate good progress has been made. After considering these and other factors similar to those that apply to adults, the two elders can determine whether the child may be recognized as an unbaptized publisher.—Luke 6:45; Rom. 10:10.

**DEDICATION AND BAPTISM**

If you have taken in accurate knowledge and have shown love for God by conforming your life to divine requirements and by sharing in the field ministry, you need to solidify your personal relationship with Jehovah. How? By making a dedication to him in



whole strength.” (Mark 12:30) All of us are required to be whole-souled in our service to God. This means that we can individually demonstrate the depth of our devotion and the genuineness of our dedication by doing our utmost in the ministry. (2 Tim. 2:15) There are many opportunities open to each of us, according to our individual circumstances and abilities. Just consider what some of these opportunities are, and decide what theocratic goals you will pursue in fulfilling your ministry.

### **SERVING AS A CONGREGATION PUBLISHER**

All who embrace the truth have the privilege of publishing the good news. This is the basic work that Jesus gave his disciples to do. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) A disciple of Jesus Christ usually begins speaking to others about the good news just as soon as he recognizes its value. This is what Andrew, Philip, Cornelius, and others did. (John 1:40, 41, 43-45; Acts 10:1, 2, 24; 16:14, 15, 25-34) Does this mean that a person may participate in telling others about the good news even before he gets baptized? Yes. As soon as an individual qualifies as an unbaptized publisher in the congregation, the opportunity to participate in the house-to-house preaching is open to him. Also, according to his ability and circumstances, he may regularly share in other features of the Christian ministry.

As a baptized member of the congregation, you are no doubt interested in doing all you can to help others learn the good news. Men and women alike have the privilege of sharing in the God-ordained preaching work. All should set a fine example in fulfilling their respective roles within the congregation. (1 Tim. 2:9-15; Titus 2:1-10; 1 Pet. 5:5) Male members of the congregation who make spiritual advance-



ment and qualify may be appointed as ministerial servants. (1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12, 13) Such ones who reach out for the responsibilities of an overseer and who meet the Scriptural requirements are appointed to this office. They teach in the congregation and serve as shepherds of the flock. (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) It is certainly a privilege to have even a small part in advancing the interests of God's Kingdom. Anyone who can expand his ministry to attain additional privileges of service is happy indeed.

### **SERVING WHERE THE NEED IS GREATER**

It may be that you serve in a congregation where the territory is frequently worked and a fine witness is being given. If such is the case, you may feel that you could expand your ministry by moving to an area where there is a greater need in the field. (Acts 16:9) Your circuit overseer may have suggestions on how you can assist another congregation within the circuit. If you wish to serve in another area of your own country, you may write to the branch office for information. If you presently serve as an elder or a ministerial servant, there may be another congregation in your country that would appreciate having your assistance in caring for congregation needs.

Would you like to advance Kingdom interests in a foreign country? If so, you need to consider such a move carefully. It will certainly have an impact on you and any who accompany you. (Luke 14:28) If you are not planning to stay a long time, it may be best to consider serving in areas within your home country.

Before the branch office in your country or in another land can provide you with names of congregations that could benefit from your assistance, your Congregation Service Committee will need to



provide a letter of recommendation. This letter is required whether you are serving as an elder, a ministerial servant, a pioneer, or a publisher. The service committee will send a letter of recommendation along with your inquiry directly to the branch office of the country where you desire to serve.

If serving where the need is greater is something that you would like to do, why not discuss the matter with the elders in your congregation? They may be able to help you determine how to go about making such a move or how to qualify for such service sometime in the future.

### **WORKING WITH A FOREIGN-LANGUAGE CONGREGATION**

In order to expand your ministry, you may wish to consider learning another language, including a sign language. In some bilingual families, both parents and youths are serving in foreign-language congregations to care more fully for Kingdom interests. If you have the goal of learning to preach in another language, why not speak with the elders and the circuit overseer? They may be able to offer suggestions and needed encouragement. In some cases, under the direction of the branch office, circuits have organized language classes to help reach the local immigrant population.

### **AUXILIARY, REGULAR, AND SPECIAL PIONEER SERVICE**

All publishers should be acquainted with the general requirements for auxiliary, regular, and special pioneer service as well as other branches of full-time service. From time to time, *Our Kingdom Ministry* sets out additional specific information. A pioneer publisher must be an exemplary baptized Christian



whose personal circumstances allow him or her to spend the specified number of hours each month in publicly preaching the good news. The Congregation Service Committee approves applications for auxiliary pioneer service, whereas regular and special pioneers are appointed by the branch office.

*Auxiliary pioneers* may be appointed for a minimum of one month, for any number of consecutive months, or on a continuous basis, according to their circumstances. Many Kingdom publishers enjoy serving as auxiliary pioneers on special occasions, such as during the Memorial season or the month of the circuit overseer's visit. Some choose vacation months. Baptized, school-age publishers may wish to enroll as auxiliary pioneers during months they have time off from school. Whatever your personal circumstances, if you are maintaining a clean moral standing, can arrange to meet the specified hour requirement in the field ministry, and believe that you could serve one or more months as an auxiliary pioneer, the congregation elders will be pleased to consider your application for this privilege of service.

To qualify for appointment as a *regular pioneer*, you must currently be in a position to reach the yearly field service requirement. *Our Kingdom Ministry* suggests a monthly goal of hours that will assist you in fulfilling this responsibility. As a regular pioneer, you must always work in close cooperation with the congregation where you are serving. Zealous pioneers are a real blessing to a congregation, generating enthusiasm for the field ministry and even encouraging others to take up the pioneer service. Before the elders recommend that you be appointed as a regular pioneer, however, you must be baptized for at least



six months, have good morals, and show yourself to be an exemplary publisher. You must be able to follow a practical schedule that will enable you to spend the required number of hours in field service.

*Special pioneers* are usually selected from among regular pioneers who have demonstrated their effectiveness in the ministry and who are able to serve wherever the branch office chooses to assign them. Often this is an isolated area where they can find interest and form new congregations. At times, special pioneers are assigned to congregations that need help in covering their territory regularly. Some special pioneers who are also elders have been assigned to help small congregations, even where there is not a particular need for more workers in the field. Special pioneers receive a modest reimbursement for necessary living expenses.

### MINISTERIAL TRAINING SCHOOL

The steady increase in new congregations being formed each year gives evidence of Jehovah's blessing upon the efforts of his people to preach the good news of the Kingdom. (Acts 16:5) With the increase in congregations, the need for additional elders and ministerial servants also grows. Single brothers who qualify are encouraged to fill this need by saying to Jehovah: "Here I am! Send me." (Isa. 6:8) Many have responded in this way by applying to attend the Ministerial Training School, which is reserved for single ministerial servants and elders who are willing and able to serve where the need is greater. Such ones can learn more about the requirements by attending the meetings for brothers interested in the Ministerial Training School when these are held at circuit assemblies.



This school gives instruction in Bible teachings and in organizational matters so as to equip qualified men to handle congregational shepherding and other responsibilities. (Jer. 23:4) As a result of such training, some are assigned to serve where the need is greater in their own countries, whereas others receive assignments in foreign countries. Some are asked to return to their home congregations to help and encourage the local brothers and sisters. Those trained are better equipped to render spiritual and organizational help to God's people.—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

### **MISSIONARY SERVICE**

In order for the Kingdom good news to be preached “to the most distant part of the earth” before the end comes, it has been necessary to send missionaries forth into many lands. (Acts 1:8; Matt. 24:14) This has opened up opportunities for expanded service privileges for thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses, especially those who have already proved themselves to be zealous, whole-souled in their devotion, and effective in Kingdom service. Those invited to share in missionary work are usually given specialized training at the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead.

A person must have good physical health and stamina to qualify for missionary work, since many missionaries are assigned to countries where living conditions are difficult. Besides being exposed to diseases, a missionary may be required to adjust to a different standard of living and an entirely new culture.

If you are already in full-time service and would like to reach out for additional privileges as a missionary, you can learn more about the requirements by attending the meetings for those interested in



missionary service when these are held at district conventions. Your circuit overseer may also be able to give you good advice. If you qualify, you may be privileged to take up this avenue of service that has contributed so much to the worldwide expansion of true worship.

### **BETHEL SERVICE**

Serving at one of the many Bethel homes around the world is a special privilege. The name Bethel means "House of God," and that designation is certainly appropriate for these centers of theocratic activity. Brothers and sisters in Bethel service do a vital work in connection with producing and distributing literature used by Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide. From Brooklyn Bethel, the Governing Body provides oversight and direction for congregations throughout the earth.

Much of the service performed at Bethel is hard physical work. For this reason, those called into Bethel service are mainly dedicated, baptized brothers who are young in years, in good health, and physically strong. If there is a need in your country and you would like to serve at Bethel, you can learn more about the requirements by attending the special meetings for those interested in Bethel service when these are held at district conventions. Your circuit overseer can also be of assistance in this regard.

### **CONSTRUCTION VOLUNTEER**

The construction of Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls is a form of sacred service, similar to the work of constructing Solomon's temple. (1 Ki. 8:13-18) Many brothers and sisters show outstanding zeal for Jehovah's organization by volunteering their time and assets to support and have a part in this work.



Are you in a position to assist in this aspect of sacred service? If you are a baptized publisher and are willing to share in such activity, the Regional Building Committee would very much appreciate your offering to assist. If you are unskilled in building trades or are an unbaptized publisher in good standing in the congregation, you may be able to assist with the building of a Kingdom Hall in your area. Why not let the local elders and circuit overseer know of your availability to help? Some baptized publishers who qualify have even been in a position to volunteer for international construction work on Kingdom Hall and Assembly Hall projects in other countries.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR SPIRITUAL GOALS?**

If you have dedicated your life to Jehovah, your expressed desire is to serve Jehovah forever. But what are your spiritual goals along the way? Having spiritual goals will help you to direct your energies and other resources wisely. (1 Cor. 9:26) You will be able to aim for something worthwhile. Such goals are conducive to spiritual growth and will help you to concentrate on the more important things as you reach out for additional service privileges.—Phil. 1:10; 1 Tim. 4:15, 16.

In his illustration of the sower, Jesus emphasized that good soil produces varying amounts of fruitage. He said: “As for the one sown upon the fine soil, this is the one hearing the word and getting the sense of it, who really does bear fruit and produces, this one a hundredfold, that one sixty, the other thirty.” (Matt. 13:23) If we have got the sense of the word in our heart, should we not exert ourselves so as to produce abundant fruitage to Jehovah’s praise? Do we not want to bear much Kingdom fruitage as we zealously



to assemble in public places. (Acts 19:8, 9) Private homes were also used to teach the Scriptures and to enjoy association with true believers. (Rom. 16:3, 5; Col. 4:15; Philem. 2) Sometimes it was necessary for the early Christians to meet in isolated or secluded places to avoid detection by persecutors. Indeed, faithful servants of God in the past had a sincere desire to assemble in places of worship in order to be “taught by Jehovah.”—Isa. 54:13.

Today, too, private homes and public places are used as Christian meeting places. Private homes often serve as locations of Congregation Book Studies or meetings for field service. Those who offer their home for such meetings, as circumstances require, view this as a privilege. Many report that they have benefited spiritually by opening their home in this way.

### **KINGDOM HALL**

The principal meeting place of Jehovah's Witnesses is the Kingdom Hall. In some localities, it is more convenient to rent a hall than to buy or to build one. However, many congregations have chosen to purchase property and build their own Kingdom Hall suited to their needs. Or they have bought and renovated an existing building. In such cases, it is appropriate to have a dedication program. If only minor changes or renovations are made to an existing Kingdom Hall, there is no need to have a dedication program again.

The Kingdom Hall should not be an elaborate building made to impress others. While its design may vary from place to place, its purpose is functional. (Acts 17:24) In accord with local circumstances, it should be a comfortable and convenient place for holding Christian meetings.



Each Kingdom Hall is financed by the local congregation(s) of Jehovah's Witnesses. No collection plate is passed, nor is solicitation for funds made. A contribution box is provided, and those attending meetings have the privilege of caring for necessary expenses in connection with the use of the hall. They do so willingly, from the heart. (2 Cor. 9:7) Elders are generally familiar with information regarding ownership and operation of the Kingdom Hall as set out in *Our Kingdom Ministry*, memorandums, and letters provided by the branch office.

Those in the congregation should consider it a privilege to support the Kingdom Hall financially and to volunteer their services in keeping it clean, presentable, and in good repair. Both inside and out, the Kingdom Hall should properly represent Jehovah's organization. An elder or a ministerial servant is usually assigned to see that necessary work is cared for in accord with a list of things to be done each week. Generally, cleaning is arranged according to Congregation Book Study groups, with the book study overseer or his assistant taking the lead.

Where more than one congregation meets in a hall, the elders of the congregations involved will set up a Kingdom Hall Operating Committee to see that necessary maintenance is done on the building and property. The bodies of elders will designate a chairman. Working under the direction of the bodies of elders, the operating committee monitors the hall cleaning, making sure that the hall is kept in good repair and that sufficient supplies are on hand. Basically, the committee does the work that would be done by just one elder or ministerial servant if only one congregation met in the hall. Close cooperation among all involved is required.



When several congregations meet in one Kingdom Hall, any schedule of meeting times that involves rotation is worked out through the elders in a spirit of mutual concern and brotherly love. (Phil. 2:2-4; 1 Pet. 3:8) Whether the rotation is done once a year or once every few years is left up to the local congregations to decide. No one congregation should take it upon itself to make such decisions on behalf of other congregations. The rotation of meeting times should take place during the first week of the calendar year. When the circuit overseer visits one of the congregations in the Kingdom Hall, the other congregation(s) will adjust their meeting times as needed for that week.

The Kingdom Hall may be used for weddings and funerals with the permission of the Congregation Service Committee. These elders carefully consider what is requested and base their decision on direction provided by the branch office.

Those who are granted use of the Kingdom Hall for such purposes are expected to conduct themselves in a way that befits a place of true worship. All involved should be sure that nothing is done that would offend the congregation or bring reproach upon Jehovah and the good name of the congregation. (Phil. 2:14, 15) At times, use of the Kingdom Hall may be granted for other spiritual functions under the direction of the branch office, such as the Kingdom Ministry School and the Pioneer Service School.

The congregation should always treat their meeting places with respect. Dress, grooming, and decorum should bespeak the dignity associated with worshipping Jehovah. (Eccl. 5:1; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10) Applying counsel in this regard is a way of showing appreciation for our Christian meetings.



**ARRANGEMENTS FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP****123**

At meetings in the Kingdom Hall, qualified brothers are assigned to serve as attendants. They should be alert, have friendly personalities, and use good judgment. Their responsibilities include greeting newcomers and making them feel welcome, helping latecomers to find seats, recording attendance figures, and giving necessary attention to proper heating and ventilation of the hall. Maintaining order during the meetings is essential. It is recommended that children sit with their parents. When a child becomes unruly, an attendant might ask the parent in a kind and tactful way to take the child out, so that the audience will not be unduly distracted. Parents with young children can be encouraged to sit where they will cause the least distraction if it becomes necessary to take the children out to discipline them or to care for other needs.

Since the conduct of children inside the Kingdom Hall as well as outside can reflect favorably or unfavorably on the congregation, attendants should, where necessary, remind parents to give proper supervision, so that children do not run in the building or around the property before and after the meetings. The service performed by attendants obviously contributes much to everyone's enjoyment of the meetings. It is preferable that ministerial servants be used as attendants, particularly those who have had experience handling situations that arise in family life.—1 Tim. 3:12.

**KINGDOM HALL CONSTRUCTION**

At Kingdom Halls in many lands, there is a contribution box for the Kingdom Hall Fund. This fund is used to help finance the building of new Kingdom Halls and the renovation of those in need of repair.



gatherings, not with a troubled conscience, but with the satisfaction of having been spiritually refreshed.

### **SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Children of Jehovah’s Witnesses benefit from getting a basic secular education. While attending school, they are interested in learning how to read and write well. Other subjects taught in primary school as well as in high school can be of value to young people as they pursue spiritual goals. During their school years, they want to make a diligent effort to ‘remember their Creator’ by putting spiritual things first.—Eccl. 12:1.

If you are a Christian youth attending school, you need to exercise special care. When worldly youths go unrestrained in their rebellious conduct, you must not side with them. (2 Tim. 3:1, 2) Under these circumstances, there is much you can do to ward off worldly influences. Jehovah has not left any of us exposed to dangers without providing the necessary protection. (Ps. 23:4; 91:1, 2) So take advantage of Jehovah’s provisions; this will serve to safeguard you.—Ps. 23:5.

To keep separate from the world while in school, young Witnesses should consider the danger of becoming involved in extracurricular activities. Classmates and teachers may not always understand your decision not to participate. However, pleasing God is what counts. This requires that you exercise your Bible-trained conscience and stand firm in the resolve not to become involved in worldly competition or nationalistic practices, which violate Bible principles. (Gal. 5:19, 26) By listening to the Scriptural counsel of godly parents and benefiting from the good association and instruction of the congregation,



you young ones will be aided in holding to Jehovah's righteous standards.

### **SECULAR WORK AND ASSOCIATES**

Family heads have a Scriptural obligation to provide for the needs of their own household. (1 Tim. 5:8) Even so, as ministers they recognize that their secular work is secondary to the pursuit of vital Kingdom interests. (Matt. 6:33; Rom. 11:13) By practicing godly devotion and being content with sustenance and covering, they avoid the anxieties and snares of the materialistic way of life so common in the world.—1 Tim. 6:6-10.

Not only family heads but all dedicated Christians who find it necessary to be secularly employed should have Scriptural principles in mind. Making honest provision for ourselves means that we refuse to engage in activities that violate God's law or that are against the law of the land. (Rom. 13: 1, 2; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10) Also, there is a need to be constantly aware of the dangers of bad association. As soldiers of Christ, we refrain from engaging in commercial endeavors that violate Christian standards or jeopardize our spirituality. (2 Tim. 2:4) Neither do we have connections with God's religious enemy, "Babylon the Great."—Rev. 18:2, 4; 2 Cor. 6:14-17.

Observing God's righteous standards will prevent us from taking advantage of our theocratic association in order to promote personal or other business interests. The purpose of our association with others at Christian meetings in the local congregation and when attending circuit assemblies and conventions is exclusively to worship Jehovah, feeding at his spiritual table and enjoying an interchange of encouragement. (Rom. 1:11, 12; Heb. 10:24, 25) Such association should be kept on a spiritual level.



can usually dispose of minor offenses by forgiving and forgetting.—Matt. 7:12.

But if something has disturbed your relationship with someone in the congregation so much that you feel that another approach is needed, wisdom dictates that you do not delay in resolving the matter, knowing that your relationship with Jehovah is also involved. Jesus counseled his disciples: “If, then, you are bringing your gift to the altar and you there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, and go away; first make your peace with your brother, and then, when you have come back, offer up your gift.” (Matt. 5:23, 24) There may have been a misunderstanding. If so, it should be cleared up by giving priority to Christian unity and keeping the lines of communication open. Good communication among all in the congregation goes a long way toward preventing misunderstandings and resolving problems that arise because of human imperfection.

### **PROVIDING NEEDED SCRIPTURAL COUNSEL**

At times, overseers may find it necessary to counsel someone, trying to readjust his thinking. This is not always easy. To the Christians in Galatia, the apostle Paul wrote: “Brothers, even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness.”—Gal. 6:1.

By lovingly caring for the flock, overseers protect the congregation from many spiritual dangers and prevent serious problems from developing. Shepherds of the flock should strive to make their service to the congregation measure up to Jehovah's promise through Isaiah: “Each one must prove to be like



a hiding place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless country, like the shadow of a heavy crag in an exhausted land.”—Isa. 32:2.

### **RESOLVING CERTAIN SERIOUS WRONGS**

Willingness to overlook offenses and to forgive does not mean that we are unconcerned about wrongdoing or that we approve of it. Not all wrongs can be charged to inherited imperfection; nor is it for our brother's good or for the good of the congregation to overlook wrongs that go beyond minor offenses. (Lev. 19:17; Ps. 141:5) The Law covenant recognized degrees of seriousness of sins and transgressions. This is also true in the Christian arrangement.—1 John 5:16, 17.

Jesus outlined some specific procedures for resolving problems involving serious wrongdoing that may arise between fellow Christians. Note the steps that he set out: “If your brother commits a sin, [1] go lay bare his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, [2] take along with you one or two more, in order that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every matter may be established. If he does not listen to them, [3] speak to the congregation. If he does not listen even to the congregation, let him be to you just as a man of the nations and as a tax collector.”—Matt. 18:15-17.

The illustration that Jesus subsequently gave, recorded at Matthew 18:23-35, shows that the sins considered at Matthew 18:15-17 are evidently such sins as those involving financial or property matters—failure to make proper payment for something or



some action involving a measure of fraud—or the damaging of someone's reputation by actual slander.

If you have solid evidence that someone in the congregation has committed such a serious sin against you personally, do not be hasty to turn to the overseers or others, asking them to intervene on your behalf. As Jesus counseled, speak first with the one against whom you have a complaint. Try to resolve the matter between just the two of you without involving anyone else. If he does not respond favorably to your efforts, you may let a little time pass before taking the matter further. Keep in mind that Jesus did not say '*go only once*, and lay bare his fault.' Therefore, if the person does not initially admit the wrong and ask forgiveness, it may be good to consider approaching him again later. If the matter can be straightened out in this way, the one who sinned will certainly appreciate that you have not told others about his sin or marred his good reputation in the congregation. You will have achieved your objective of 'gaining your brother.'

If the one who committed the offense accepts responsibility, seeks forgiveness, and straightens the matter out, there is no need to carry the matter further. This shows that although serious, the offenses here discussed are limited to those that can be settled between the individuals involved. This does not include such offenses as fornication, adultery, homosexuality, blasphemy, apostasy, idolatry, and similar gross sins. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:19-21) These sins require more than forgiveness from an offended individual. Since the spiritual and moral cleanness of the congregation may be threatened, such matters should be reported to the elders and handled by them.—1 Cor. 5:6; Jas. 5:14, 15.



If you are not able to gain your brother by ‘laying bare his fault between you and him alone,’ then you may do as Jesus said—take along one or two others and speak with your brother again. Those you take with you should also have the objective of gaining your brother. Preferably, they would be witnesses of the alleged wrongdoing, but if there are no eyewitnesses, you may choose to take along brothers to be witnesses to the discussion. They may have experience in the matter at issue and may be able to establish whether what occurred was truly a wrong. Elders chosen as witnesses do not represent the congregation, since the body of elders has not specifically assigned them in the matter.

If you are convinced that your brother has committed a serious sin against you and you have evidence to prove it and the matter has not been resolved after repeated efforts—when you spoke with him alone and when you went to him with one or two others—and you feel that you cannot let it pass, then you should report the matter to the overseers of the congregation. Remember that their goal too is to maintain the peace and cleanness of the congregation. Having approached the elders, you will have taken the matter as far as you can. Leave the problem in their hands, and trust in Jehovah that it will be resolved. Never should you allow the conduct of someone else to stumble you or to rob you of your joy in Jehovah’s service.—Ps. 119:165.

If upon investigation it becomes evident to the shepherds of the flock that the brother has indeed committed a serious sin against you and yet has been unwilling to repent and try to make reasonable and appropriate amends, it may become necessary for the overseers to expel the unrepentant wrongdoer.



In that way they protect the flock and safeguard the cleanness of the congregation.—Matt. 18:17.

### **MARKING DISORDERLY ONES**

In his second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul warned of certain ones who were walking disorderly and who if accorded good standing in the congregation could exert an unhealthy influence. Paul admonished the Thessalonian Christians “to withdraw from every brother walking disorderly and not according to the tradition you received from us.” He further clarified that statement by writing: “If anyone is not obedient to our word through this letter, keep this one marked, stop associating with him, that he may become ashamed. And yet do not be considering him as an enemy, but continue admonishing him as a brother.”—2 Thess. 3:6, 14, 15.

Occasionally, someone not known to be guilty of practicing a grave sin for which he could be expelled nevertheless displays flagrant disregard for theocratic order. This could include such things as being grossly lazy or critical, being a profitless talker who is a constant ‘meddler with what does not concern him.’ (2 Thess. 3:11) Or this could include one who is scheming to take material advantage of others or indulging in entertainment that is clearly improper. The disorderly conduct is not so minor that it can be handled by applying Bible counsel and manifesting love; rather, it is serious enough to reflect badly on the congregation and potentially to spread to other Christians.

After giving repeated admonition to such an individual and finding that he persists in disregarding well-established Bible principles, the elders may decide that a talk should be given to the congregation



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providing appropriate counsel concerning such disorderly conduct. Elders will use reasonableness and discernment in determining whether a particular situation is sufficiently serious and disturbing to require a warning talk. This talk will not name the disorderly one. However, those who are aware of the situation described in the talk will take heed and limit their social contacts with such individuals.

The loving concern and firm stand of faithful members of the congregation could indeed move the disorderly one to shame and repentance. When it is clearly evident that the individual has abandoned his disorderly course, it would no longer be necessary to treat him as a marked individual.

**HANDLING CASES OF SERIOUS WRONGDOING**

After taking the steps outlined at Matthew 18:15, 16, some individual brothers or sisters may report to the elders cases of unresolved serious wrongdoing. (Matt. 18:17) On the other hand, individuals may also approach the elders either to confess their own sin or to report what they know regarding the wrongdoing of others. (Lev. 5:1; Jas. 5:16) Regardless of the manner in which the elders first hear reports of serious wrongdoing on the part of a baptized member of the congregation, an initial investigation will be made by two elders. If it is established that there is substance to the report and that evidence is available showing that a serious sin actually has been committed, the body of elders will assign a judicial committee of at least three elders to handle the matter. Regarding serious wrongdoing by one who is unbaptized, see pages 157-8.

While exercising watchful care of the flock, seeking to protect it from any elements that would be



spiritually damaging, the elders will also endeavor to use God's Word skillfully to reprove any who have erred and will try to restore them. (Jude 21-23) This is in harmony with instructions given to Timothy by the apostle Paul, who wrote: "I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is destined to judge the living and the dead, . . . reprove, reprimand, exhort, with all long-suffering and art of teaching." (2 Tim. 4:1, 2) Doing so may take much time and effort, but this is part of the hard work of the elders. The congregation appreciates their endeavors and gives them double honor.—1 Tim. 5:17.

In every situation where guilt is established, the primary endeavor of the overseers is to restore the wrongdoer if he is genuinely repentant as indicated, for example, by his producing "works that befit repentance." (Acts 26:20) If he is repentant and they are able to help him, their administering reproof either in private or before onlookers with knowledge of the case serves to discipline him and instill a wholesome fear in any such onlookers. (2 Sam. 12:13; 1 Tim. 5:20) In all cases of judicial reproof, restrictions are imposed. Thus the wrongdoer may be helped to 'make straight paths for his feet' thereafter. (Heb. 12:13) In due course these restrictions are removed as the individual's spiritual recovery becomes manifest.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF REPROOF**

If a judicial committee determines that an individual is repentant but that the matter is likely to become known in the congregation or in the community or if for other reasons the elders believe that the congregation needs to be advised, a simple announcement will be made during the Service Meeting. It should read: "[Name of person] has been re-



proved.” The presiding overseer should approve this announcement.

### **IF THE DECISION IS TO DISFELLOWSHIP**

In some cases the wrongdoer may become hardened in his course of sinful conduct and thus fail to respond to efforts to help him. Fruitage, or works, befitting repentance may not be in evidence, nor may genuine repentance be apparent at the time of the judicial hearing. What then? In such cases, it is necessary to expel the unrepentant wrongdoer from the congregation, thus denying him fellowship with Jehovah’s clean congregation. This is done to remove the bad influence of the wrongdoer from the congregation, thereby safeguarding the moral and spiritual cleanness of the congregation and protecting its good name. (Deut. 21:20, 21; 22:23, 24) When the apostle Paul became aware of the shameful conduct of a member of the congregation in Corinth, he admonished the elders to “hand such a man over to Satan . . . in order that the spirit [of the congregation] may be saved.” (1 Cor. 5:5, 11-13) Paul also reported the disfellowshipping of others who had rebelled against the truth in the first century.—1 Tim. 1:20.

When a judicial committee concludes that an unrepentant wrongdoer should be disfellowshipped, it should let him know of the decision, clearly stating the Scriptural reason(s) for the disfellowshipping. When informing the wrongdoer of their decision, the judicial committee should tell him that if he believes that a serious error in judgment has been made and he wishes to appeal the decision, he may do so by writing a letter clearly stating the reasons for his appeal. He will be allowed seven days for this, from the time he was notified of the committee’s decision. If



such written appeal is received, the body of elders should contact the circuit overseer, who will designate elders to serve on an appeal committee to rehear the case. The elders selected to care for this weighty responsibility should be men who are experienced and qualified. Every effort should be made to conduct the appeal hearing within one week after the written appeal is received. If there is an appeal, announcement of the disfellowshipping will be held in abeyance. In the meantime, the accused person will be restricted from commenting and praying at meetings or from special privileges of service.

An appeal is granted as a kindness to the accused and allows him a further hearing of his concerns. Thus, if he deliberately fails to appear at the appeal hearing, the disfellowshipping should be announced after reasonable efforts have been made to contact him.

If the wrongdoer does not wish to appeal, the judicial committee should explain to him the need for repentance and what steps he can take toward being reinstated in due time. This would be both helpful and kind and should be done in the hope that he will change his ways and in time qualify to return to Jehovah's organization.—2 Cor. 2:6, 7.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF DISFELLOWSHIPPING**

When it is necessary to disfellowship an unrepentant wrongdoer from the congregation, a brief announcement is made, simply stating: "[Name of person] is no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses." There is no need to elaborate. This will alert faithful members of the congregation to stop associating with that person. (1 Cor. 5:11) The presiding overseer should approve this announcement.



**DISASSOCIATION**

The term “disassociation” applies to the action taken by a person who, although a baptized member of the congregation, deliberately repudiates his Christian standing, rejecting the congregation by his actions or by stating that he no longer wants to be recognized as or known as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Because he is disassociated, his situation before Jehovah is far different from that of an inactive Christian, one who no longer shares in the field ministry. An inactive person may have failed to study God’s Word regularly, or because of experiencing personal problems or persecution, he may have lost his zeal for serving Jehovah. The elders as well as other concerned members of the congregation will continue rendering appropriate spiritual assistance to an inactive brother. (Rom. 15:1; 1 Thess. 5:14; Heb. 12:12) However, the person who disassociates himself by repudiating the faith and deliberately abandoning Jehovah’s worship is viewed in the same way as one who is disfellowshipped. A brief announcement is made to inform the congregation, stating: “[Name of person] is no longer one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.”

Concerning those who renounced their Christian faith in his day, the apostle John wrote: “They went out from us, but they were not of our sort; for if they had been of our sort, they would have remained with us.” (1 John 2:19) For example, a person might renounce his place in the Christian congregation by his actions, such as by becoming part of a secular organization that has objectives contrary to the Bible and, hence, is under judgment by Jehovah God. (Isa. 2:4; Rev. 19:17-21) If a person who is a Christian chooses to join those who are disapproved by God, a



brief announcement is made to the congregation, stating: "[Name of person] is no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses." Such a person is treated in the same way as a disfellowshipped person. The presiding overseer should approve this announcement.

### **REINSTATEMENT**

A disfellowshipped person may be reinstated when he gives clear evidence of repentance, demonstrating over a reasonable period of time that he has abandoned his sinful course and is desirous of having a good relationship with Jehovah and His organization. The elders are careful to allow sufficient time, perhaps many months, a year, or even longer, for the disfellowshipped person to prove that his repentance is genuine. When the body of elders receives a written plea for reinstatement, the judicial committee that disfellowshipped the person should, if possible, be the committee that speaks with the individual. The committee will evaluate the evidence of works of godly repentance on his part and decide whether to reinstate him at that time or not.

If the person requesting reinstatement was disfellowshipped by another congregation, a local judicial committee may meet with the person and consider the plea. Thereafter, the local judicial committee will communicate with the body of elders of the congregation that disfellowshipped the individual, giving them its recommendation. The involved committees will work together in unity to ensure that all the facts are gathered and a just decision is made. However, the decision to reinstate is made by the original judicial committee of the congregation that took the disfellowshipping action. If some members of the original committee are no longer in the congregation



or qualified to serve, other elders from the original congregation can be chosen to replace them.

When the judicial committee is convinced that the disfellowshipped person is genuinely repentant and should be reinstated, an announcement of the reinstatement is made in the congregation where the individual was disfellowshipped. If the person is now in another congregation, the announcement will be made there as well. It should simply state: “[Name of person] is reinstated as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.”

### **WHEN UNBAPTIZED PUBLISHERS ARE WRONGDOERS**

What of unbaptized publishers who become involved in serious wrongdoing? Since they are not baptized members of the congregation, they cannot be formally disfellowshipped. However, they may not fully understand the Bible’s standards, and kind counsel may help them to make straight paths for their feet.

If an unbaptized wrongdoer is unrepentant after two elders have met with him and have tried to help him, then it is necessary to inform the congregation. A brief announcement is made, stating: “[Name of person] is no longer recognized as an unbaptized publisher.” The congregation will then view the wrongdoer as a person of the world. Although the offender is not disfellowshipped, Christians exercise caution with regard to any association with him. (1 Cor. 15:33) No field service reports would be accepted from him.

In time, an unbaptized person (adult or minor) who was removed as a publisher may wish to renew his association with the congregation and become a publisher again. In that situation, two elders would meet with him and ascertain his spiritual progress. If he



has a good attitude, a Bible study may be held with him. If he progresses spiritually and eventually qualifies, a brief announcement can be made, stating: "[Name of person] is again recognized as an unbaptized publisher."

### **CASES INVOLVING MINOR BAPTIZED CHILDREN**

Serious wrongdoing on the part of minor children who are baptized should be reported to the elders. When the elders handle cases of serious sins involving a minor, it is preferable that the baptized parents of the young person be present and cooperate with the judicial committee, not attempting to shield the erring child from necessary disciplinary action. Just as in dealing with adult offenders, the judicial committee endeavors to reprove and restore the wrongdoer. However, if the young person is unrepentant, disfellowshipping action is taken.

### **JEHOVAH BLESSES UNITED, CLEAN WORSHIP**

All who are associated with the congregation of God today can certainly rejoice in the rich spiritual estate that Jehovah has given to his people. Our spiritual pastures have indeed been made lush, and we have been provided with an abundance of refreshing waters of truth. We have experienced Jehovah's protective care through his theocratic arrangement under the headship of Christ. (Ps., 23; Isa. 32:1, 2) Being in the spiritual paradise in these troublesome last days has given us a feeling of security.

By maintaining fine conduct and Christian unity as ministers of God's good news, we will continue to let the light of Kingdom truth shine forth. (Matt. 5:16) With Jehovah's blessing, we will have the joy of seeing many more people come to know Jehovah and serve with us in doing God's will.



## CHAPTER 15

# BENEFITING FROM THEOCRATIC SUBJECTION

**B**EING in subjection to God, the Universal Sovereign, is essential if we are to be organized to do Jehovah's will. Our recognizing his Son's headship over the Christian congregation is also necessary. And it is important that we observe the headship principle in other areas of life. Such theocratic subjection benefits everyone concerned.

The idea of subjection to constituted authority was introduced to mankind in the garden of Eden. It is embodied in God's commands found at Genesis 1:28 and 2:16, 17. Lower creatures were to be in subjection to humans, and Adam and Eve were to submit to God's will and authority. Obedience to this divine authority would result in peace and good order. The headship principle is later highlighted at 1 Corinthians 11:3. The apostle Paul wrote: "I want you to know that the head of every man is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man; in turn the head of the Christ is God." So this indicates that other than Jehovah, everyone is subject to headship in this overall arrangement.

Most people today do not recognize or observe the headship principle. Why? The trouble started in Eden when mankind's parents deliberately chose to take themselves out from under God's sovereign headship. (Gen. 3:4, 5) However, they did not attain to greater freedom. Instead, they became subject to a wicked spirit creature, Satan the Devil. The first rebellion alienated mankind from God. (Col. 1:21) As a result, today the majority of mankind remain in the power of the wicked one.—1 John 5:19.



By learning the truth of God's Word and acting upon it, we have come out from under Satan's influence. As dedicated, baptized Witnesses, do we not accept Jehovah as the Sovereign of our life? Do we not agree with loyal King David, who acknowledged Jehovah as "head over all"? (1 Chron. 29:11) Certainly we do! We humbly confess: "Jehovah is God. It is he that has made us, and not we ourselves. We are his people and the sheep of his pasturage." (Ps. 100:3) We recognize Jehovah's greatness and his worthiness of total submission, since he created all things. (Rev. 4:11) As ministers of the true God, we follow Jesus Christ, who set the perfect example of subjection to God.

What did Jesus learn by the things he suffered while on earth? Hebrews 5:8 answers: "Although he was a Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered." Yes, Jesus remained in loyal subjection to his heavenly Father even under adversity. Furthermore, Jesus did not do a single thing of his own initiative; he did not speak of his own originality, nor did he seek his own glory. (John 5:19, 30; 6:38; 7:16-18) During his ministry, he found delight in doing his Father's will, even though this course brought opposition and persecution. (John 15:20) Nonetheless, Jesus showed subjection to God by 'humbling himself' even to the point of "death on a torture stake." The outcome of his complete subjection to Jehovah was rewarding in many ways, resulting in everlasting salvation for mankind, exaltation for himself, and glory to his Father.—Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 5:9.

### **AREAS OF THEOCRATIC SUBJECTION**

Because Jehovah is the Universal Sovereign, we owe him our total subjection. (Isa. 33:22) Briefly re-



flecting on our everyday life as Jehovah's dedicated worshipers should make this evident. By putting God first in our life, doing his will, we are directed in the right way. (Ps. 16:8) We escape many of the anxieties and frustrations that overtake those who refuse to submit to Jehovah's sovereignty. Our Adversary, the Devil, constantly seeks to ensnare and devour us. We will experience deliverance from that wicked one provided we take a stand against him and humble ourselves before Jehovah in willing subjection. —Matt. 6:10, 13; 1 Pet. 5:6-9.

The benefits of subjecting ourselves to God extend to our relationships with others, which are measurably improved. We are spared problems that beset those who reflect this world's spirit of independence. Thanks to Jehovah God, we enjoy a happy marriage and family life as well as better relationships with fellow workers and employers. We conduct ourselves lawfully and with a good conscience toward governmental authorities. We also have the best associates, our Christian brothers.

Within the Christian congregation, we recognize Christ's headship and the authority he has given to the faithful and discreet slave class. This affects our attitude and conduct toward one another. Godly subjection in the congregation will move us to be obedient to God's Word in all aspects of our worship. This includes our ministry, meeting attendance and participation, relationship with the elders, and cooperation with organizational arrangements.—Matt. 24:45-47; 28:19, 20; Heb. 10:24, 25; 13:7, 17.

Our subjection to God allows us to enjoy the peaceful security of theocratic order. Such theocratic order is not oppressive. (1 John 5:3) Jehovah's divine



qualities are reflected in the harmonious society of his godly subjects. (1 Cor. 14:33, 40) Our own observations and our experience with Jehovah's organization have led us to express sentiments similar to those of God's servant David. After noting the contrast between Jehovah's servants and the wicked, who boast in their own power and riches, David joyfully exclaimed: "Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!" —Ps. 144:15.

Within marriage and the family structure, "the head of a woman is the man." At the same time, men are to be in subjection to Christ, while the Head of Christ is God. (1 Cor. 11:3) Wives are to be in subjection to their husbands, and children, to their parents. (Eph. 5:22-24; 6:1) Peace results when each family member follows the headship principle.

This requires that husbands exercise headship in a loving way, imitating Christ. (Eph. 5:25-29) When they do not abuse or abdicate their headship, it is a delight for the wife and the children to be in subjection. The wife's role is that of a helper, or complement. (Gen. 2:18) By patiently supporting and respecting her husband, she gains his favor and brings praise to God. (1 Pet. 3:1-4) When husbands and wives follow the Bible's counsel on headship, they set an example for their children in showing subjection to God.

Our being in subjection to God also affects how we view "the superior authorities," which have been "placed in their relative positions by God." (Rom. 13:1-7) As law-abiding citizens, Christians pay taxes; they pay back "Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." (Matt. 22:21) Being submissive and obedient to the duly constituted authorities in every-



thing that is not in conflict with Jehovah's righteous law, we are able to direct our efforts, applying our energies to the important work of preaching the good news of God's established Kingdom.—Mark 13:10; Acts 5:29.

By adhering to Bible principles, Christians seek to improve their employer-employee relationships. Even though at times this may be difficult, servants of God strive to be at peace with all men. They serve honestly and reliably at their secular jobs. (Rom. 12:18; 1 Pet. 2:18) Thus, they do not become involved in controversies or violate their Bible-trained conscience.

Theocratic subjection affects all aspects of life. With eyes of faith, we see the day when all mankind will be subject to Jehovah God. (1 Cor. 15:27, 28) How blessed and favored those who joyfully acknowledge Jehovah's sovereignty will be, as they remain in subjection to him for all eternity!

## CHAPTER 16

### A UNITED BROTHERHOOD

**A**FTER dealing with one man, Abraham, and his descendants the Israelites exclusively for some 2,000 years, Jehovah God “turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name.” (Acts 15:14) People for Jehovah's name would be his witnesses, gathered in unity of thought and action regardless of their physical location on earth. This uniting of a people for God's name would result from the fulfillment of the commission that Jesus gave to his followers. He said: “Go therefore and make



feel free to ask for assistance from the one who is studying the Bible with you or from the elders.

In your discussions with the elders, do not feel that you have to give lengthy or complicated answers to the questions. A simple, direct answer in your own words will usually suffice. For many of the questions, it is also beneficial to refer to one or two Bible texts that show the Scriptural basis for your answer.

If you have not yet gained sufficient knowledge of basic Bible teachings, the elders will arrange for you to receive assistance so that you will be able to express in your own words a proper understanding of the Scriptures and qualify to be baptized at a later time.

[Note to congregation elders: Instructions for handling discussions with baptism candidates appear on pages 217-18.]

## **QUESTIONS FOR THOSE DESIRING TO BE BAPTIZED**



### **PART I ELEMENTARY BIBLE TEACHINGS**

Unless you were raised by Christian parents, your study of the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses has acquainted you with the pattern of truth, and very likely, you find that it is quite different from what you formerly believed. (2 Tim. 1:13) What you have learned has brought you great spiritual refreshment and has no doubt given you the hope of future life and blessings on a paradise earth under God's Kingdom. Your faith in God's Word has been strengthened, and through association with the Christian congregation, you have already experienced many blessings. You have come to appreciate how Jehovah is dealing with his people today.—Zech. 8:23.

Whether you were raised in a Christian household or not, as you prepare for water baptism in symbol of your personal dedication to Jehovah God, you will benefit from a review of elementary Bible teachings, conducted by the congregation elders. (Heb. 6:1-3) May Jehovah continue to bless all your endeavors to take in knowledge of him, and may he grant you the promised reward.—John 17:3.



**12. What Christian quality should outstandingly characterize our relationship with our spiritual brothers and sisters?**

I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves.—John 13:34, 35.

Clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union.—Col. 3:14.

Additional reference: 1 Cor. 13:4-7.

**13. How should Christians view the shortcomings of fellow believers?**

Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Even as Jehovah freely forgave you, so do you also.—Col. 3:13.

Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.—1 Pet. 4:8.

Additional references: Prov. 17:9; 19:11; Matt. 7:1-5.

**14. If your brother's sin against you is of a serious nature, what should you do?**

If your brother commits a sin, go lay bare his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take along with you one or two more, in order that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every matter may be established. If he does not listen to them, speak to the congregation. If he does not listen even to the congregation, let him be to you just as a man of the nations and as a tax collector.—Matt. 18:15-17.

**15. What is the fruitage of the spirit, and how will cultivating it help us to maintain a fine relationship with others?**

The fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.—Gal. 5:22, 23.



### **37. What birthday celebrations are mentioned in the Bible? How does this affect your view of birthday celebrations?**

When Herod's birthday was being celebrated the daughter of Herodias danced at it and pleased Herod so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. Then she, under her mother's coaching, said: "Give me here upon a platter the head of John the Baptist." Grieved though he was, the king out of regard for his oaths and for those reclining with him commanded it to be given; and he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. And his head was brought on a platter and given to the maiden, and she brought it to her mother.—Matt. 14:6-11.

Additional references: Gen. 40:20-22; Eccl. 7:1, 8.

## **PART III JEHOVAH'S ARRANGEMENT OF THINGS**

Through your study of the Bible, you have learned that Jehovah has a purpose to bring all things back into subjection to himself, just as they were in the beginning. (1 Cor. 15:24-28; Eph. 1:8-10) Having reached this point in your study, you are no doubt eager to find your place in Jehovah's arrangement and to be submissive to his rule. The following questions and Scripture references will help you examine your own understanding of submission to Jehovah's arrangements regarding congregation organization, Christian family life, and the political elements of this system of things. You will be able to examine your appreciation for Jehovah's arrangement for educating and building up his people spiritually. That includes your attending and participating in congregation meetings to the extent of your circumstances and ability.

Additionally, this section will focus on the importance of having a regular share in the Kingdom-preaching work, helping others to come to know Jehovah and what he is doing for mankind. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) Finally, it will impress upon your mind the seriousness of dedicating yourself to Jehovah God before submitting to water baptism. You can be certain that Jehovah appreciates your sincere response to his undeserved kindness expressed in your behalf.



### **1. In God's arrangement of things, who is the head of the married woman?**

You wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as it is becoming in the Lord.—Col. 3:18.

Let wives be in subjection to their husbands as to the Lord, because a husband is head of his wife as the Christ also is head of the congregation, he being a savior of this body.—Eph. 5:22, 23.

### **2. How should a husband exercise headship over his wife?**

Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself, for no man ever hated his own flesh; but he feeds and cherishes it, as the Christ also does the congregation.—Eph. 5:28, 29.

You husbands, keep on loving your wives and do not be bitterly angry with them.—Col. 3:19.

### **3. Is the wife whose husband is not a believer freed from his headship?**

You wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, in order that, if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives, because of having been eyewitnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect.—1 Pet. 3:1, 2.

### **4. Who is primarily responsible before God for the training and disciplining of children?**

Fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah.—Eph. 6:4.

### **5. What responsibility do children have in the family arrangement?**

Children, be obedient to your parents in union with the Lord, for this is righteous: "Honor your father and your mother"; which is the first command with a promise: "That it may go well with you and you may endure a long time on the earth."—Eph. 6:1-3.



You children, be obedient to your parents in everything, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord.—Col. 3:20.

### **6. What is the proper attitude for Christians to maintain toward worldly rulers?**

Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities, for there is no authority except by God; the existing authorities stand placed in their relative positions by God.—Rom. 13:1.

Continue reminding them to be in subjection and be obedient to governments and authorities as rulers.—Titus 3:1.

### **7. Must a Christian pay all taxes and assessments demanded by law?**

Render to all their dues, to him who calls for the tax, the tax; to him who calls for the tribute, the tribute; to him who calls for fear, such fear; to him who calls for honor, such honor.—Rom. 13:7.

Additional reference: Luke 20:21-25.

### **8. Are there any circumstances under which a Christian would refuse to obey worldly rulers?**

With that they called them and charged them, nowhere to make any utterance or to teach upon the basis of the name of Jesus. But in reply Peter and John said to them: “Whether it is righteous in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, judge for yourselves. But as for us, we cannot stop speaking about the things we have seen and heard.”—Acts 4:18-20.

In answer Peter and the other apostles said: “We must obey God as ruler rather than men.”—Acts 5:29.

### **9. Should Christians comply with legal requirements that do not conflict with God's laws, such as registering marriages and births, responding to census inquiries, or obtaining required licenses and permits?**

In those days a decree went forth . . . for all the inhabited earth to be registered . . . Of course, Joseph also went up



from Galilee . . . to get registered with Mary, who had been given him in marriage.—Luke 2:1-5.

Continue reminding them to be in subjection and be obedient to governments and authorities as rulers.—Titus 3:1.

### **10. What is the headship arrangement in the Christian congregation?**

I want you to know that the head of every man is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man; in turn the head of the Christ is God.—1 Cor. 11:3.

### **11. Who is the Head of the Christian congregation?**

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; because by means of him all other things were created in the heavens and upon the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, no matter whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All other things have been created through him and for him. Also, he is before all other things and by means of him all other things were made to exist, and he is the head of the body, the congregation.—Col. 1:15-18.

### **12. How can you identify “the faithful and discreet slave” today?**

Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings.—Matt. 24:45-47.

### **13. What is the Governing Body of the Christian congregation?**

Certain men came down from Judea and began to teach the brothers: “Unless you get circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” But when there had occurred no little dissension and disputing by Paul and Barnabas with them, they arranged for Paul and Barnabas and some others of them to go up to the apostles and older men in Jerusalem regarding this dispute.—Acts 15:1, 2.



As they traveled on through the cities they would deliver to those there for observance the decrees that had been decided upon by the apostles and older men who were in Jerusalem. Therefore, indeed, the congregations continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number from day to day.—Acts 16:4, 5.

#### **14. By what visible means is Christ's headship represented in the congregation?**

Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son.—Acts 20:28.

To the older men among you I give this exhortation . . . Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock.—1 Pet. 5:1-3.

#### **15. How do members of the congregation demonstrate submission to the headship of Christ in the congregation?**

Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith.—Heb. 13:7.

Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.—Heb. 13:17.

#### **16. Whose ideas are recorded in the Bible? Why should you regularly study God's Word?**

All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work.—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.