

CIRCUIT OVERSEER MEETS WITH ELDERS AND MINISTERIAL SERVANTS PROGRAM FROM SEPTEMBER 2011 THROUGH FEBRUARY 2012

Note to the circuit overseer:

Make a special effort to be encouraging to the appointed brothers. Give specific, warm commendation for the work they do. Any counsel needed should be offered lovingly. Assure them they have Jehovah's approval and the support of the branch office

Theme: 'Throw all your anxiety upon Jehovah' (1Pe 5:7)

INTRODUCTION (4 min.)

Anxiety is a very real part of life in these "last days" (2Ti 3:1)

The apostle Peter tells us what we need to do in order to allay our anxieties [Read 1 Peter 5:7]
Jesus Christ spoke about the danger of being distracted by excessive anxiety (Lu 21:34-36)

Just as overeating and heavy drinking can produce a physical sluggishness, so becoming weighed down with the "anxieties of life" can cause spiritual sluggishness (Heb 6:11, 12)

Anxieties have overwhelmed some, making them feel unable to continue handling the responsibilities involved in serving Jehovah

Some may hold back from reaching out, thinking they will be unable to shoulder greater responsibilities

What should we do if feelings of anxiety threaten to interfere with fulfilling our God-given responsibilities?

AS APPOINTED MEN, THROW ALL YOUR ANXIETIES UPON JEHOVAH (14 min.)

As appointed men, there are many things that cause anxiety

Question: What are some sources of *your* anxiety?

[Preparing meeting parts, family responsibilities, congregation problems, preparing reports, financial concerns, health problems, and so forth]

How can you deal with these anxieties?

Meaningful prayers and in-depth personal study (Php 4:6, 7)

Be specific in discussing *all* your anxieties with Jehovah

When we have a medical appointment, we are specific with the doctor; we do not speak in generalities

Imitate Jesus; when his distress grew very intense, he prayed "more earnestly" [Read Luke 22:44]

Find consolation by studying and meditating on Jehovah's Word [Read Psalm 94:18, 19]

Keeping an especially comforting Bible text in mind for a few hours, or even a whole day, can keep your mind from becoming unduly anxious (w83 3/1 6-7)

When faced with a number of assignments, make a practical plan to complete them

Situation: On Sunday an appointed servant is assigned to conduct the meeting for field service, deliver the public talk, assist in shepherding a publisher, and has promised his family to share in some recreation with them

Question: What can help him to care for these important responsibilities? (Php 1:10)

[List all the things you need to do. Prioritize. What absolutely has to be done?

What can safely be put off until later? Calculate how much time you need to get things done and when you can do them. Be realistic. Take one assignment at a time. Think of ways to increase your efficiency. Ask experienced appointed men for advice. Learn to say no. Be aware of your limitations. (Pr 11:2) As time permits, include points from the box on page 27 of the December 8, 1987, *Awake!*]

[**Reminder:** The elders who assign meeting parts should check with one another to avoid, if possible, assigning the same brother multiple parts on the same evening or week (*be* 284-285 par. 9)]

Do not worry about things that have not happened and may never happen (Mt 6:34)

HOW TO DEAL WITH ANXIETY IN CARING FOR OUR FAMILY (13 min.)

The spirituality of our family is our foremost concern

Be consistent with family worship (*km* 1/11 3-5)

If appointed brothers take this seriously, it will have a positive effect on others

It will also contribute to our freeness of speech (1Ti 3:13)

Despite our best efforts, not all family members may respond favorably

This was true even in the case of Jesus' family members, though later some accepted the good news and became believers (Mr 3:21; Ac 1:14)

Unfortunately, some children of appointed men have been disfellowshipped, presenting a challenge regarding association

What should be our position toward adult disfellowshipped family members living outside the home? (*w11* 7/15 31-32 pars. 12-19; *lv* 208-209)

Situation: The adult disfellowshipped son of an appointed man living outside of the home requests permission to return

Question: What factors will the appointed brother consider in analyzing the request?

[Although it is a personal decision as to whether a family head will allow a disfellowshipped relative back into the home, it is the responsibility of the body of elders to review the qualifications of any appointed person who permits such a situation (*km* 8/02 4 pars. 10-11; *w88* 3/1 24 par. 5; *w81* 9/15 29 pars. 16-17)]

Reduce family anxiety by keeping a simple eye (Mt 6:22)

Ask yourself: 'Would it be possible to simplify my life so that one or more of my family could begin pioneering? Am I setting a good example for my family by not pursuing things that could hamper my ability to put Kingdom interests first?' (1Jo 2:15)

[Summarize the experience of Richard and Ruth from the March 15, 2011, *Watchtower*, pages 15 and 16, paragraphs 14 and 15]

HOW TO DEAL WITH *OTHER* CAUSES OF ANXIETY (17 min.)

Elders and ministerial servants have been entrusted with a serious responsibility—that of caring for “the flock of God” (1Pe 5:1, 2)

Sadly, the branch office continues to receive reports of *disunity* among bodies of elders

Disunity within the body of elders distracts brothers from their assignment to preach and impedes the flow of holy spirit (Eph 4:30)

It is important to identify Satan as the one trying to destroy our unity (*w92* 11/15 22-23 par. 19)

Question: How can the following Bible principles help to maintain unity? [Read Romans 12:3, 10; Philippians 4:5]

Another cause of anxiety is making unwise choices with regards to *entertainment*

Although it is appropriate to set aside time for wholesome recreation and entertainment, we must be balanced and use good judgment (Mr 6:31)

Satan continues to claim victims by the unclean practice of viewing pornography

How should we react if we accidentally come across a pornographic image? [Read Job 31:1 and highlight information in the December 2007 *Awake!*, pages 12 and 13]

The branch office continues to receive reports that appointed men are becoming involved with the deliberate viewing of pornography. [Set aside a couple of minutes to kindly and lovingly reason with the appointed servants to come forward and seek help if they are currently battling with the problem of viewing pornography. This is a problem that in most cases cannot be overcome without help from others.] In order to serve Jehovah ef-

fectively, we must maintain a clean conscience. (1Ti 3:2, 9) Additionally, it is the primary responsibility of the one who is spiritually sick to take the initiative and “call the older men” for help when necessary (Jas 5:14)

Social networking on the Internet can also contribute to anxiety

It is very popular and not limited to young ones

Although it is not wrong to make use of social networks on the Internet, Christians must consider the time involved and the danger of bad association (Ps 26:4, 5; g 8/11 10-13; g 7/11 24-27)]

As spiritual men, let us not allow the world to mold us, but rather may we continue to ‘perceive what the will of Jehovah is’ (Eph 5:17; Ro 12:2)

LOCAL NEEDS (8 min.)

CONCLUSION (2 min.)

To remain clearly focused spiritually, as appointed men we must continue to throw all our anxieties upon Jehovah while caring for our family and in dealing with all causes of anxiety

Always remember that he really does care for his servants (1Pe 5:7b)

As Jehovah’s people, we have various ways of coping with anxiety. Applying God’s Word is especially helpful

Our own humility and patience are highly beneficial in dealing with anxiety that may beset us

Especially important is implicit trust in Jehovah, for our faith is built up as we experience his help and direction

In turn, faith in God can keep us from becoming unduly troubled (Joh 14:1)

Let us, therefore, keep on throwing all our anxiety upon Jehovah

[At this point, the ministerial servants should be dismissed. Thereafter, consider with the elders other necessary matters needing attention]

INFORMATION FOR THE ELDERS ONLY (2 min.)

We would like to remind the elders of the need to be judicious in the use of mobile telephones while discussing confidential matters. As you know, elders are always reminded to turn off or put in silent/vibration mode their mobile phones when at a meeting considering confidential matters. Without realizing it, a call can be placed from some phones with voice activation. In such a case, a person not privy to a conversation could actually hear confidential information being discussed at a meeting. While this may be a rarity, it has occurred, and thus illustrates that technology must be controlled so that it does not inadvertently reveal confidential talk. We all do well to be mindful of the divine warning: “Do not reveal the confidential talk of another” (Pr 25:9)