

CIRCUIT OVERSEER MEETS WITH ELDERS AND MINISTERIAL SERVANTS PROGRAM FOR SEPTEMBER 2015 THROUGH FEBRUARY 2016

Note to the circuit overseer:

Please ask the elders and ministerial servants to bring a copy of the April 15, 2015, issue of *The Watchtower* to the meeting. Encourage them to review the first two study articles in advance. Throughout the meeting, look for opportunities to commend the brothers for what they are doing. Freely refer to key points in the above-mentioned articles when making application of the material. If the elders have not taken specific measures to train others, kindly help them with practical and specific suggestions. This will better equip them to do so after your visit. The example you set as a loving and kind teacher will accomplish much good in reinforcing what you present

Theme: “The things you heard from me . . . , entrust to faithful men” (2Ti 2:2)

INTRODUCTION (4 min.)

More than ever, qualified men are needed to take the lead [**Read Isaiah 60:22**]

Newly formed congregations need capable men to help care for the flock

Existing congregations need to be kept strong

Age, changing circumstances, and unexpected events will eventually limit what those currently serving as elders can do (Ec 9:11; Mic 6:8)

Therefore, dear elders, we appeal to you to make training a priority *today*

Do not limit your view based solely on local needs or circumstances (Ac 16:9, 10; 2Co 8:13, 14)

Training is a wise investment and supports worldwide spiritual activities and growth

If training is postponed, there will not be sufficient men to care for congregation needs

How can elders make training a priority? What can ministerial servants do to be good learners?

WHO SHOULD BE IDENTIFIED AS LEARNERS? (8 min.)

Paul encouraged Timothy to be a teacher of “faithful men” [**Read 2 Timothy 2:2**]

Question: Who are the “faithful men,” or learners, of today?

Answer: All baptized men should be viewed as potential learners (*w15 4/15 4 par. 3, ftn.*)

(1) Ministerial servants of all ages

They may be trained to take on greater responsibilities, thereby expanding their service and lightening the load of the elders (Ac 6:1-4)

(2) Baptized older brothers with potential to qualify for privileges of service

Some who have learned the truth later in life have a wealth of practical experience to draw from, yet they may need training in congregation matters

(3) Baptized younger brothers (Ac 16:1-3)

Training *soon after* baptism helps them to develop important skills and to develop qualities like reliability, willingness, humility, and joy in serving others (*w15 4/15 10 par. 4*)

Even preteens and those in their early teens readily respond to training (Ps 71:5, 17)

Such early training will help them keep their eyes on spiritual goals and not be sidetracked by worldly trends or desires

Have you taken time to identify the learners in your congregation? Do not delay in giving them training!

BE A SKILLFUL TEACHER (12 min.)

What makes an elder a skillful teacher?

He loves training and he loves the one being trained [**Read John 5:20**]

Questions: [Refer to the picture on page 7 of the April 15, 2015, *Watchtower*] How will the situation pictured help both the teacher and the learner? How will this prepare the learner's heart? What could happen if the learner discerns that training is being given only out of a sense of duty?

Just as a gardener cultivates the soil before sowing seeds, a wise elder looks to create the right conditions for spiritual growth

Consider Samuel's methods and attitude when readying Saul for the kingship [**Analyze 1 Samuel 9:17–10:1**]

Questions: What two valuable lessons do we learn from this example? In what practical ways can we imitate Samuel when training others? (*w15* 4/15 6-7 pars. 14-20)

Elders who imitate Samuel are a true blessing to the entire congregation (1Pe 4:10)

HOW TO TRAIN (14 min.)

Before planting seeds, a gardener may add nutrients to the soil

A teacher will do the same by sharing nourishing Scriptural thoughts to prepare, or encourage, the heart of the learner [**Read Psalm 119:18**]

Situation: A brother seems to lack motivation and is not reaching out

Question: Why might it be effective to ask a question such as 'How has your dedication to Jehovah changed the way you use your life?' (*w15* 4/15 10 pars. 3-5)

Explain the Scriptural reason for an assignment so that he learns to think in terms of Bible principles (*w15* 4/15 11 par. 7)

Talk with a learner about his spiritual goals and help him set attainable ones

Start training young brothers by giving them assignments that fit their age, such as cleaning duties, handing out assignment slips, and the like (*km* 7/13 3, box)

They will feel a sense of accomplishment and be motivated to accept further training eagerly

Generous commendation for a job well done will help learners to thrive and should not be overlooked (Mt 3:17)

Questions: [Refer to the picture on page 11 of the April 15, 2015, *Watchtower*] What effective training methods do you observe in this picture? Why is it important to commend a learner?

If a brother we are training makes a mistake, be patient with him

Paul did not give up on Mark, although Paul felt disappointed by one of the decisions Mark made after receiving extensive training with the apostle (Ac 13:2-5, 13; 15:38; Col 4:10, 11; *w10* 3/15 7-8)

On occasion, a brother may struggle with an assignment he has been given. Rather than concluding that the brother is not qualified, kindly point out how he can improve and review the goals and procedures of his assignment (*w11* 11/15 30 par. 11)

[Refer to the box "How to Train Others" on page 8 of the April 15, 2015, *Watchtower*, and invite the brothers to comment on suggestions they plan to try]

HUMBLY ACCEPT TRAINING (12 min.)

Ministerial servants, *humbly accept training* as did Elisha (*w15* 4/15 12 par. 13)

Humility is displayed by:

(1) Being faithful in carrying out any assignment (Ps 101:6; Lu 16:10) [**Read 2 Kings 3:11**]

If you are given congregation responsibilities, do not rush to change the way things are being done

Question: Why is it important to be patient in this way? [Refer to the April 15, 2015, *Watchtower*, page 13, paragraph 17, and invite the brothers to comment]

(2) Imitating the methods of your trainer as did Elisha (1Co 4:17) [**Read 2 Kings 2:13, 14**]

Be patient during the training

Ask questions of your trainer in a respectful manner and patiently listen to the response

(3) Praying for holy spirit to help you accept and benefit from training (Joh 14:13, 14)

This shows Jehovah that you recognize your need for his guidance in order to carry out your assignment properly (Ps 19:7; 2Co 4:7)

Accepting training will help prepare you to assist the congregation further

For example, paying attention to how the elders reason on Bible principles will enable you to become an example in word and deed (1Ti 4:12)

Situation: A publisher approaches a ministerial servant to tell him about a new movie that he wants to see. All indications from the advertising of the movie are that it features violence and immoral content. After listening to what the publisher has to say and seeing his excitement about wanting to see the movie, the ministerial servant considers how he might respond

Question: If he has accepted training, how will he be able to help the publisher?

Answer: He would be equipped to be an example in word and deed. He would also be in a position, because he has deepened his spirituality through Bible reading and study, to help the publisher reason on Bible principles regarding how his choice of entertainment affects the publisher's relationship with Jehovah and others (Ps 97:10; Eph 5:3, 4)

LOCAL NEEDS (8 min.)

CONCLUSION (2 min.)

Skillful teachers and faithful learners are a true blessing to the flock

Efforts to train and to benefit from training will result in stronger congregations and help us remain united now and especially during the great tribulation (Eze 38:10-12; Mic 5:5, 6)

We encourage all to make training a regular feature of their ministry today!

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

CONCERNS REGARDING CONDUCT, DRESS, AND GROOMING (8 min.)

“The spirit of the world” is leading people to blur the distinction between the genders as never before (1Co 2:12; De 22:5)

This trend is affecting some in the congregation

Some brothers lean toward effeminate characteristics and grooming habits

Some sisters have adopted a masculine hairstyle or type of dress

Since this sort of dress and conduct is popular in the world, some may not be aware of the improper message that their conduct and grooming sends to others

Provide loving assistance

Please note two areas of concern among brothers

(1) The tendency to dress in the so-called metrosexual style, which usually includes tight-fitting jackets and pants that highlight the body

(2) The manifesting of effeminate traits, perhaps in one's bearing, body language, and manner of speech

Sisters also need to avoid tight-fitting or revealing clothing (1Ti 2:9, 10)

If you notice individuals (brothers or sisters) whose dress and grooming reflect the *extremes* of the world, please offer kind counsel in an effort to readjust such individuals “in a spirit of mildness” (Ga 6:1; w97 6/15 17-18 pars. 14-18; w88 8/15 17 pars. 9-10)

While the world puts great emphasis on one's appearance and often goes to extremes, true Christians take the balanced viewpoint expressed in God's Word and concentrate on adorning the inner person [**Read 1 Peter 3:3, 4**]

Any individual who manifests the aforementioned extremes in dress and grooming or who displays gender-blurring characteristics should not be recommended for Bethel service or the School for Kingdom Evangelizers

Furthermore, if the body of elders agrees that a brother or sister is blatantly and deliberately ignoring *repeated counsel*, and his or her dress and grooming is disturbing to the congregation, the elders may determine that the person no longer qualifies to share in the ministry. In such rare cases, no announcement would be made to the congregation