

## **CIRCUIT OVERSEER MEETS WITH ELDERS AND MINISTERIAL SERVANTS PROGRAM FOR SEPTEMBER 2018 THROUGH FEBRUARY 2019**

*Note to the circuit overseer:*

Warmly express appreciation for all that the appointed men are doing in caring for the needs of the congregation, especially in the ministry. Not all cited texts need to be read, nor must every subpoint be discussed. The tone of the meeting should be loving and positive

Theme: “Keep Your Senses . . . Fully Accomplish Your Ministry” (2Ti 4:5)

### **BECOME TEACHERS OF THE TRUTH (15 min.)**

Around 65 C.E., near the end of the Jewish system of things, the apostle Paul conveyed an urgent message to Timothy, who was already an experienced elder **[Read 2 Timothy 4:5]**

With the onset of persecution and difficulties, it was more important than ever that Timothy ‘keep his senses’ and ‘fully accomplish his ministry’

The faithful slave also recognizes that the end is very near and has placed greater emphasis on finding those who are “rightly disposed,” rather than just placing literature (Ac 13:48)

As appointed men, we should be skilled at starting conversations and sharing Bible truths. We should also be skilled in using the publications that have been designated as part of our Teaching Toolbox (*mwb18.04 7*)

We help publishers improve their teaching skills by our own example and by conducting effective meetings for field service (2Ti 2:2; *mwb16.06 2*; *km 3/15 6*)

An important part of fully accomplishing our ministry involves ‘making disciples’ (Mt 28:19, 20; *km 9/05 3-6*)

The Greek word translated “make disciples” has the sense of teaching with the *intent* of making pupils, or disciples (“make disciples” study note on Mt 28:19, *nwtsty*)

This involves starting and conducting *progressive* Bible studies

**Question:** What are signs of a progressive Bible study? (*km 12/15 3* Question Box) [Is the person making changes in harmony with Bible principles? Has he attended some congregation meetings? Does he share with others what he is learning?]

Since our focus is to help Bible students become disciples, be willing to discontinue unproductive studies (*km 10/88 8 ¶4-6*)

Be balanced when deciding whether to discontinue a Bible study. Make allowance for age and abilities, since each person progresses at a different rate. If you discontinue a Bible study, keep the door open to resume the study in the future

We need to accomplish our ministry fully by persevering and paying constant attention to ourselves and to our teaching (1Ti 4:16)

### **KEEP MORALLY CLEAN (10 min.)**

Appointed servants must ‘keep their senses’ by remaining morally clean in both thought and action (Mt 5:28)

Accurate knowledge about Jehovah’s standards for moral cleanness is vital (Php 1:9)

Christians must “flee from sexual immorality [Greek, *por-nei'a*]” (1Co 6:18)

*Por-nei'a* does not always involve the use of the hands or skin-to-skin contact (*ks10 5:5*)

Example: A man lies down on top of his girlfriend while both are clothed, and they simulate having sex. Even though their hands are not used and there is no skin-to-skin contact, they are committing *por-nei'a* because their genitals are being manipulated with lewd intent

The influence of Satan’s world is pervasive

One survey showed that every second, nearly 30,000 persons view pornographic websites; every minute, Internet users send more than 1.7 million pornographic e-mails (*w13* 8/1 5, box)

We must take decisive action to strengthen our faith and to remain morally clean from the corrosive influence of deceptive desires (Eph 4:22-24)

Some who have viewed pornography began by viewing provocative images, such as people in swimwear and models in advertisements

They rationalized that viewing suggestive images was acceptable, reasoning that ‘as long as it’s not pornography, it’s OK’

With a relaxed sense of danger, their actions later escalated to viewing worse things

**Question:** What can a person who is struggling with an attraction to pornography do? [Identify and avoid situations that may tempt him to let his guard down, such as surfing the Internet late at night; humbly acknowledge his weakness before Jehovah and pray for his help; memorize and meditate on scriptures that deal with specific weakness, such as Psalm 119:36, 37]

If any servant of Jehovah has fallen into the practice of viewing pornography, he should immediately seek help from the elders to overcome his problem and maintain moral cleanness

**[Read Psalm 119:176]** Although in some way the psalmist had strayed from Jehovah’s commands, he still had a good heart. He admitted his mistake and accepted correction. Because he cleansed his path, Jehovah used him as a Bible writer

## **REMAIN ALERT DURING CRITICAL TIMES** (15 min.)

We are living in “critical times hard to deal with” (2Ti 3:1-5)

Our brothers need to ‘keep their senses’ in view of the coming great tribulation

Various situations can test our faith

Persecution and opposition may cause fear (2Ti 3:12)

Our brothers might suffer loss from natural disasters (Lu 21:11)

False stories in the media may shake the faith of some (2Th 2:2)

The elderly and the sick may face discouragement (1Th 5:14)

Young ones may be struggling with “youthful desires” (2Ti 2:22)

Elders should be alert to recognize the needs of the brothers and promptly come to their aid (*w13* 11/15 29-30 ¶15-17)

Use every opportunity to get to know the members of your congregation—especially those in your field service group

Try to understand the situations that the brothers are facing and encourage them with the Scriptures

Remind them that Jehovah knows and loves each one of his faithful servants and will never allow lasting harm to come to them **[Read Isaiah 43:4, 13]**

**Situation:** A brother reads a news article on the Internet that contains false accusations and half-truths about Jehovah’s Witnesses. He begins to harbor doubts and lose his spiritual balance

**Question:** How can this brother be helped to ‘keep his senses’ by reasoning on the following scriptures? [Proverbs 14:15; Matthew 5:10-12; John 10:4, 5]

When help is provided as soon as problems are identified, they can be resolved before they become serious

Jehovah will help us by giving us power and wisdom to care for his flock during these critical times (Pr 2:6)

**[At this point, the ministerial servants should be dismissed.** Thereafter, please review with the elders the following information and any other matters needing attention]

## CONFIDENTIALITY DURING JUDICIAL HEARINGS (1 min.)

As a reminder, audio or video recordings of judicial hearings are not permitted

## LOCAL NEEDS (9 min.)

[In addition to local needs, provide reminders from the June 2017 study edition of *The Watchtower*, page 8, paragraph 16, regarding what to do when a parent asks someone to study the Bible with his minor child. Also, provide reminders from the September 2016 *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*, page 2, regarding what to do when a child answers the door in the ministry]

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM KINGDOM MINISTRY SCHOOL (10 min.)

The recent Kingdom Ministry School has helped us to ‘keep our senses’ and ‘fully accomplish our ministry’ by equipping us to be better shepherds [When reviewing the subjects of making recommendations, evaluating pioneers, and protecting minors, emphasize the need to be thoroughly familiar with the latest direction from the organization and mention where the direction is located]

### (1) Keep Jehovah before you constantly (Ps 16:8)

Prove yourself a spiritual man, and feed exclusively at “the table of Jehovah” (1Co 10:21)

Avoid “the table of demons,” which promotes disgraceful sexual perversions, pornography, and violent debasing entertainment (w02 4/1 30)

### (2) Continue applying yourself to teaching (1Ti 4:13)

Recall the four videos that were presented with the goal of assisting us to improve our teaching ability: “How to Attack an Outline,” “Were Not Our Hearts Burning?,” “Be Aglow With the Spirit,” and “Practice! Practice! Practice!—And Do So Out Loud!”

Since many suffer from discouragement due to increasing pressures, our talks should motivate and inspire others to love Jehovah and draw strength from him (Pr 24:10; Mt 22:37)

### (3) Take seriously your responsibility of making recommendations for appointment or deletion

Carefully review *beforehand* the requirements found in the Bible and in our publications (1Ti 5:22)

Obtain complete information on brothers being recommended, especially those who have had problems in the past

If wrongdoing took place in a different congregation, communicate with the elders there

**Question:** When an appointed servant demonstrates poor judgment that is not of a judicial nature, why is it usually best that any recommendation for deletion be considered at the next visit of the circuit overseer? [The circuit overseer will be able to speak directly with the elders and the brother in question in order to obtain a more complete view of the matter]

### (4) Exercise balance when evaluating regular pioneers

Show consideration to those who care for additional theocratic assignments

### (5) Protect minors from abuse

**Question:** When an individual reports an allegation of child sexual abuse to the elders, of what should the elders inform him? [He has the right to report the matter to the secular authorities]

**Question:** If the body of elders concludes that there is sufficient Scriptural evidence to warrant the formation of a congregation judicial committee on the grounds of child sexual abuse, what should the coordinator of the body of elders first do? [Contact the circuit overseer]

Child abuse victims and their families need ongoing shepherding