

## CIRCUIT OVERSEER MEETS WITH ELDERS AND MINISTERIAL SERVANTS PROGRAM FOR MARCH 2014 THROUGH AUGUST 2014

*Note to the circuit overseer:*

In addition to the outline for Thursday or Friday evening, a **10-minute** outline to be covered with the elders and ministerial servants on Tuesday evening either before or after the congregation meeting is included. Please consider the circumstances of the appointed men and their families before informing them in advance when the outline for Tuesday will be considered. For Tuesday, bring the *Congregation's Publisher Record* (S-21) cards for all inactive publishers. Please prepare well for these meetings, and show consideration for the brothers and their families by not going overtime (tg 4:5; 21:11; 22:2)

### TUESDAY EVENING OUTLINE

#### **ASSIST INACTIVE ONES TO RETURN TO JEHOVAH'S FLOCK** (8 min.)

The Head of the congregation, Jesus Christ, has maintained a strong desire to bring each lost sheep back to the fold (Lu 15:4-7)

All appointed men need to cultivate a heartfelt desire to shepherd the sheep *as Jesus did* [**Read John 21:15-17**]

The strongest motivating force is unselfish love for those whom Jehovah and Jesus love. The Governing Body is directing that we make a special effort to personally visit, telephone, or in some other appropriate way make contact with all inactive publishers *this week*

Effort should be made to invite them to the congregation meetings

This includes making contact with inactive ones whom we may personally not know

If we do not have up-to-date contact information for such ones, we should work diligently to obtain such information, perhaps from family and friends

[Encourage the elders to follow through immediately on this direction]

During the meeting with the elders and ministerial servants to be held later in the week, additional reminders involving shepherding will be reviewed

[Privately, encourage the elders to read the *Shepherding* textbook, chapter 4, paragraphs 12-17, prior to that meeting]

#### **MAINTAIN THE QUALITIES OF A GENUINE SHEPHERD** (2 min.)

To imitate Jehovah and Jesus, we must love the brothers from the heart by feeding and shepherding them *willingly* (1Pe 5:2)

The key to effective shepherding is not an elaborate program or master checklist

It is more important to "carry" Jehovah's precious sheep *in our hearts* than on a piece of paper or on a to-do list

As appointed men ministering to God's precious flock, may our sincere interest in each member of the flock, including weaker ones, demonstrate that our genuine brotherly love has not cooled off [**Read Ezekiel 34:15, 16a**]

### THURSDAY OR FRIDAY EVENING OUTLINE

Theme: Shepherding With Insight (1Pe 5:2)

#### **REVIEW OF SHEPHERDING WITH INSIGHT VIDEO** (60 min.)

[This section of the outline is a review of the video *Shepherding With Insight* originally shown at the Kingdom Ministry School during the 2013 service year. Stop the video at each **PAUSE** ■■.

Each pause is numbered to correspond with the proper place in this outline. After each pause, follow the instructions in the outline. **Once a brother gives the correct answer to a question, please move on to the next point rather than making unnecessary statements. Allow the**

**main points to stand out.** It would be good to have someone assist you in operating the equipment while you handle the information in the outline. You should view the video several times to get well-acquainted with its content]

As was discussed on Tuesday evening, all appointed men need to cultivate a heartfelt desire to shepherd Jehovah's sheep willingly

To assist in this regard, the Governing Body has asked us to review the video *Shepherding With Insight*. This video was originally shown to congregation elders at the Kingdom Ministry School during the 2013 service year

As was done during the school, we will watch a portion and then stop it and discuss what we learned from the presentation

During the course of our meeting this evening, we will be making references to the *Shepherding* textbook [Hold up the book for the ministerial servants to see the cover]

Since it also contains confidential material for use by elders in their role as judges, ministerial servants are not provided with a copy of the book. Neither should any portion be copied and provided to them

Nevertheless, the Governing Body feels that it is appropriate for ministerial servants to be in attendance for this portion of the meeting

We are going to watch a video in which an elder engages in an unexpected, impromptu shepherding call on a distraught widow. Let us observe closely

[Do not indicate in advance whether the brothers will be seeing a good example or a bad one. This should not be revealed as they view the first part of the video]

## **PART 1—IMPROMPTU SHEPHERDING CALL—FIRST EXAMPLE (20 min.)**

<<START VIDEO>>

[4-minute segment]

|| 1 <<PAUSE VIDEO>>

**DISCUSSION (16 min.)**

**Question:** What is your overall reaction to this impromptu shepherding visit?

[Entertain one or two comments to determine if the brothers do indeed discern that this is a bad example. Then ask the following questions, and refer to the references that are noted]

**Question:** What long-standing policy did the elder violate when meeting with the sister?

**Answer:** The elder was alone with the sister, unseen by others, which we have been counseled against repeatedly [Ask an elder to read *ks10 4:27*] (*w06 9/15 26-27 par. 7*)

**Question:** What further inappropriate behavior did you discern?

**Answer:** He had physical contact, patting her hand

**Question:** [Read **James 1:19**] Based on this verse, what quality seemed to be lacking on the part of the elder?

**Answer:** He was not a good listener and spoke without thinking of the consequences of his words. Additionally, he was not attuned to the depth of her anguish and feelings

**Question:** Do you remember what the elder said that indicated that he did not fully comprehend the grieving process?

**Answer:** "It has been a year now, Mary. You should not be this upset still. We have the wonderful hope of the resurrection." The fact is, some grieve longer and more intensely than others

As this sister struggled with her emotions, this elder partially quoted 1 Thessalonians 4:13 [Read]

**Question:** What could he be implying by referring to this text?

**Answer:** This could imply that she is not manifesting enough faith in the resurrection

When the sister implied that she had suicidal thoughts, the elder quoted Exodus 20:13 when he stated: "You have to remember at Exodus 20 when Jehovah said: 'You must not murder,' that included self-murder"

**Question:** Why would such a statement not be encouraging to her?

**[Read Philippians 4:6, 7]**

**Question:** Besides his failing to bring another brother with him, what else did the elder in the video fail to do during this visit?

**Answer:** He did not even think of praying, but left abruptly

**PART 2—SHEPHERD WITH INSIGHT—GOOD EXAMPLE (10 min.)**

How might a different elder have handled the matter with insight?

<<START VIDEO>>

[3-minute segment]

|| 2 <<PAUSE VIDEO>>

**DISCUSSION (7 min.)**

**Question:** When approached by Mary after the meeting, what did Brother Sheppard immediately arrange for?

**Answer:** He arranged for another elder to join him in the conversation with Mary, instead of being in a room alone with her and unseen by others

**Question:** What was Brother Goode's response when Mary was frustrated that it had been a year and she was still very emotional over her husband's death?

**Answer:** He explained it is not wrong to have recurring moments of intense grief, mentioning that Jacob continued weeping for Joseph. He did not intimate that she should have made more progress in the grieving process

**Question:** Why was it wise for the elders not to address the issue about her desire to be reunited with Don as husband and wife?

**Answer:** It was wise because of the intense emotional anguish being experienced by Mary. In fact, while our understanding of Luke 20:35 has not changed, *The Watchtower* of June 1, 1987, page 31, stated: "So if a Christian finds it hard to accept the conclusion that resurrected ones will not marry, he can be sure that God and Christ are understanding. And he can simply wait to see what occurs." Hence, in her emotional condition, it was not necessary to address this sensitive issue

**Question:** In this case, the elders made arrangements to call on Mary later the same day. Why was this beneficial?

**Question:** Why is it important to do research before making a shepherding call?

**PART 3—THE SHEPHERDING CALL (30 min.)**

Let us now look in on the shepherding visit made later that day

<<START VIDEO>>

[8-minute segment]

<<END VIDEO>>

**DISCUSSION (22 min.)**

**Question:** When Mary brought up suicidal thoughts, how did Brother Sheppard's Bible knowledge and insight prove to be effective?

**Answer:** Rather than using platitudes, he used the account of Job very effectively to help her see that righteous Job had similar feelings and that this was an issue of integrity

Brother Sheppard may have realized that in view of Mary's severe emotional state, she was likely to have had such thoughts, and so he was mentally prepared in advance in the event that she broached the subject. In order for us to be more effective on a visit, it is good for us to think in advance about what the person is dealing with or may bring up

**Question:** How did their earlier research bring freshness to the Scriptural discussion?

**Answer:** Their research uncovered verses that carried much weight and caused Mary to sense Jehovah's love and understanding in the wake of her calamity

Because of their preparation and research, it appeared they each knew what the other one was going to address. Thus, any comment by the other elder was supportive and did not prematurely change the direction the initiating elder was pursuing

**Question:** What was the first thing the elders did on this visit?

**Answer:** They prayed with Mary before beginning the discussion

[Refer the elders to *ks10* 4:6 and the seven bullet points]

**Question:** In summary, explain how each of these seven points was demonstrated in the video just viewed

All of the points we have covered should be followed when we make our regularly scheduled shepherding visits

When making shepherding calls, we should remember that each person is different. This calls for us to use good judgment regarding what to say. For example, in this case, the elders knew Mary quite well, and so Brother Sheppard felt comfortable asking her what she would do if an immoral thought came to mind. She understood the point that she should instantly reject such thoughts of suicide. However, the same illustration might be somewhat offensive to another sister. It takes insight on the part of elders to shepherd an individual according to the person's personality and circumstances

The sheep should feel secure and tranquil in our care

Shepherds must contribute to the inner peace and sense of security of the sheep

Do more than make occasional shepherding calls; take advantage of every opportunity to give needed care at the right time

Fulfill the weighty shepherding responsibility entrusted to you (Eph 4:8, 11-14)

Do not have the attitude that shepherding is the duty of group overseers only

As we shepherd the flock of God in our care faithfully as undershepherds of Jesus, our reward and blessings will be many

The congregation will thrive, all to Jehovah's praise

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

### **SHEPHERD THE FLOCK WILLINGLY (10 min.)**

As announced on Tuesday evening, this week we are making a special effort to invite inactive ones to attend congregation meetings

If at least one inactive publisher in each congregation worldwide were to attend a meeting during the circuit overseer's visit, potentially over 100,000 inactive persons might be helped to recover their spiritual balance (Pr 24:16a)

[Please remind congregation secretaries of the basic instructions outlined in policy letters having to do with assigning inactive publishers to field service groups and maintaining the *Congregation's Publisher Record* (S-21) cards of inactive ones in the file. See *Index to Letters for Bodies of Elders* (S-22)]

Although there is an arrangement to visit those who have been baptized for one year, to invite inactive publishers to the Memorial, and to make annual visits to certain disfellowshipped persons, elders do not view shepherding simply as a "program" that involves making a shepherding call once a month

While the *Shepherding* textbook, chapter 2, paragraph 23, states that a group overseer should arrange to periodically visit all in his group, there is no need for the *body of elders* to keep track of when shepherding visits have been made, who made the visit, and what was discussed

Such well-meaning programs overly complicate matters

Likewise, it is not necessary for one brother to make general shepherding call assignments

All elders, particularly group overseers, must strive to maintain regular, if at all possible weekly, contact with the publishers (Pr 27:23)

Regular interaction with the brothers and sisters is very much needed and can be done by visiting before and after congregation meetings, by working with the friends in the ministry, and by visiting or telephoning them at other times. It includes contacting those who are sick, miss meetings, or who are irregular in the ministry

Such personal interest springs from genuine friendship and brotherly affection (Ro 12:10; 1Th 2:7, 8)

The elders' self-sacrificing love for the brothers and sisters should be evident *at all times*

Without meddling into another's personal affairs, elders strive to be a positive influence in the lives of the sheep, helping them to be strong in the faith and to make decisions that reflect godly wisdom (Php 1:9-11; 1Th 5:11)

#### **REMINDERS REGARDING HANDLING CHILD ABUSE MATTERS (5 min.)**

What steps should be taken when the body of elders determines that a basis exists for forming a judicial committee for one who has engaged in child sexual abuse?

The October 1, 2012, letter to all bodies of elders, paragraph 11, states: "Because of the delicate nature of handling a judicial case where an adult sexually abuses a child, please contact your circuit overseer. He will designate an experienced elder from your circuit to serve as chairman of the judicial committee"

When the body of elders desires to recommend to the branch office that privileges be extended to a person who has sexually abused a minor in the past, what procedure should they follow?

Although you may have received correspondence in the past directing you to write the Service Department, please note the revised direction found in the October 1, 2012, letter, paragraphs 23 and 24. This is the direction that should now be followed [**Read paragraphs 23 and 24**]

Please note that the body of elders should assign two elders to *call rather than write* the Service Department to make their request. Prior to the telephone call, the body of elders should agree that sufficient time has elapsed for the person to establish a convincing record of righteous conduct that would merit the trust of those familiar with his past misconduct