

Announcement

May 16, 2020

FOR THE ATTENTION OF ALL ELDERS

1. **Modest Use of Electronic Tools:** In many lands, elders are using videoconferencing tools effectively to hold weekly meetings, to arrange for field service, and to shepherd publishers. As a kind reminder, elders should take care not to promote electronic tools in ways that go beyond what has been directed by the organization. (1 Cor. 4:6; *w17.1* p. 18 pp. 4-5) We commend you for your hard work in caring for the publishers entrusted to your care.

2. **Easing of Governmental COVID-19 Restrictions:** The announcement for the congregation is intended to prompt family heads to consider prayerfully how to continue protecting their household. While assisting publishers, elders must be cautious not to establish or to enforce rules.

3. **Use of Kingdom Halls:** Regardless of direction from secular authorities, the Kingdom Hall should *not* be used for any meetings until further direction is received from the branch office. This applies even if the secular authorities begin to ease certain restrictions in the near future. Adjustments by the secular authorities do not automatically mean there are adjustments to theocratic activities. At this time, no additional theocratic activities are being resumed. If the body of elders believes there is an exceptional need to use the Kingdom Hall, such as for a judicial committee, a funeral, or a wedding, two elders should call the Service Department and explain the recommendation of the body of elders.

4. **Baptisms:** Those performing baptisms should take necessary precautions in accord with guidelines provided by the secular authorities to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

FOR FOLLOW-THROUGH BY THE COORDINATOR OF THE BODY OF ELDERS

1. **Announcements for the Congregation:** Ensure that the announcements for the congregation are read at the next midweek and weekend meetings.

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May 16, 2020

FOR THE CONGREGATION

1. **Virtual Literature Carts:** We recently learned that some publishers are using virtual literature carts in their ministry. We appreciate that the use of such carts is well intentioned. However, the carts are not provided by the faithful and discreet slave. In addition, the carts could be altered so that they direct people to websites that contain harmful content. Thus, such carts should not be used. Thank you for your fine spirit of cooperation in this matter. —Eph. 4:15, 16.

2. **Easing of Governmental COVID-19 Restrictions:** When the authorities remove restrictions on certain activities, you will need to consider prayerfully how this will affect your daily life. Generally, we should be more cautious than the secular authorities and our neighbors, who are often eager to resume activities for economic reasons. (Eccl. 7:12) Each *family head* must decide the wisest course for his household. (Gal. 6:5) Personal circumstances vary. Therefore, what may be a prudent decision for one family may be unwise for another. What may be safe in one area may be unsafe in another. To the extent possible, it may be best to stay at home. However, if you must leave your home, please continue applying the basic principles of health and safety, such as frequent handwashing, physical distancing, wearing a face covering, and limiting physical contact with older and high-risk persons. If you experience cold or flulike symptoms, it would be best to stay home and notify your health-care provider.

3. **Use of Kingdom Halls:** Regardless of direction from secular authorities, the Kingdom Hall should *not* be used for any meetings until further direction is received from the branch office.

4. **Participation in the Public Ministry:** All forms of the public ministry (including the door-to-door work and any form of public witnessing) should be suspended until further direction is received from the branch office.