

# Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



The Ridgeway, London, NW7 1RN Telephone: 020 8906 2211

SDI October 14, 2019

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS WITH APPOINTED PRISON MINISTERS

Re: Follow-up to Prison Witnessing Seminar

Dear Brothers:

We are writing to each body of elders that includes at least one elder appointed by the branch as a prison minister. As you will be aware, all prison ministers were invited to a seminar on September 28, where training was provided to help them with this challenging assignment. Many were able to attend in person, while others were provided with a link to stream the programme online. All the circuit overseers were also invited, since they take an active interest in prison ministry.

Since it was not possible to invite all elders to the seminar, we are pleased to provide the body of elders with a copy of the *Key Points* document produced to follow up the seminar. This is primarily for the prison ministers, but we encourage all elders to read it and take note of the guidance it contains. In particular, please consider the following points:

- A prison minister does not work independently of the body of elders; he is simply a member of the body who is able to enter the prison.
- The prison minister should involve his fellow elders, while respecting prison confidentiality.
- Any publishers in prison are the responsibility of the contact congregation body of elders, not an individual elder. The prison minister is not expected to handle matters alone.
- Requests for approval as a publisher, judicial cases and similar matters are to be handled in the same way inside or outside the prison, involving two or three elders as appropriate.
- If a prisoner who is a publisher is transferred or released, the Congregation Service Committee should prepare a letter of introduction in the usual way.
- Child protection matters involving a prisoner should be handled exactly according to chapter 14 of the *Shepherd* book.

Please set aside time at your next elders' meeting to discuss together how the body of elders can actively support the prison minister(s). Could another elder apply to share in this aspect of sacred service? Could different elders arrange to accompany a prison minister into the prison, as and when this is possible? We recommend that each quarterly elders' meeting should include an item on prison ministry so that the whole body can be updated on the activity in the prison.

We would also like to provide the body of elders with the same advice we gave the prison ministers about contacting the branch office on matters connected with a prison. Kindly note the following guide:

SUBJECT MATTER	DEPARTMENT TO CONTACT	METHOD OF CONTACT
Child protection	Legal	2 elders phone
Other case involving prisoner	Service	Letter from service committee
Question about work of prison minister	Service (Preaching Needs Desk)	1 or 2 elders phone, or letter from prison minister(s) copying in service committee

When the entire body of elders works together, the needs of all those under the care of the congregation can be met successfully. (1 Pet. 5:2) In addition, those serving as prison ministers greatly appreciate the ongoing personal interest of their fellow elders. This is invaluable in their maintaining joy in this uniquely challenging assignment. We are confident that your willing support of this arrangement will continue to bring Jehovah's favour and blessing.

This letter, along with attached *Key Points* document, should be kept in the congregation file for future reference. Thank you for giving this important matter your close attention. Please be assured of our warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,  
*Christian Congregation  
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

Attachment

c: Circuit overseers