

# Announcement

April 15, 2020

## FOR THE ATTENTION OF ALL ELDERS

**Caring for the Congregation During the COVID-19 Pandemic:** At Proverbs 21:5 the Bible states: “The plans of the diligent surely lead to success”. With the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Governing Body recognizes that the situation in many countries could suddenly deteriorate and access to some necessities of life may become very limited. There could be social unrest.

It is important for elders to shepherd publishers safely and work to assist them organize a sufficient store of necessities such as food, water, medical supplies, and so forth. Rather than wait until shortages or problems arise it is better for families to anticipate challenges and prepare now.

**1. Learn From What Has Happened Elsewhere:** Experience from other countries indicates that the COVID-19 virus can be spread by persons that do not appear to have symptoms. Often there is only a short time between when the first cases of the virus appear in a community and when things get to the point that it becomes difficult or impossible to purchase supplies. So our main goal in writing to you is to urge you to prepare now for what may happen in the coming weeks in your territory. Therefore, please carefully consider the following and take action —now!

- **Prepare for lockdown.** Families in potentially affected areas should be advised to prepare now to stay for an extended period in their homes. (*sfl* chap. 26 pars. 1-6) Some families may be limited in how many supplies they can purchase. However, each should do what they can to have a reserve of non-perishable food, water, batteries, medicine, and similar items. They should collect these items in a way that does not draw undue attention and put them in harm's way. In some locations, a family may be able to plant vegetables or other simple crops for their family. Publishers need to be flexible in what they are prepared to eat and to recognize the need to practice economy. They should be encouraged to think how they can ration food and other supplies in a time of distress. If they live in rented accommodation they should give thought to what can be done if funding for their rentals becomes unavailable.
- **Supplying basic needs.** Determine if needs can be filled from within the family, field service group, or the congregation. (Acts 4:32; *od* chap. 12 pars. 13, 14) You may need to provide some advice of on how to ration food and other supplies. Help families to plan ahead how best to safely obtain, store, and regulate their use of necessary items.

Immediately arrange to help family heads make a plan, a budget of essential items and how and where they can safely store these. If possible they should purchase supplies needed to last several weeks. They may need to purchase needed supplies over two or three separate occasions to avoid attracting attention. They should not advertise their preparations and activities on social media so as to avoid endangering themselves or others.—Matthew 10:16.

- **Use of local donations.** If publishers are clearly not able to support each other, the body of elders has approval to use donations made locally for local relief needs. Keep a clear record of what is done. Where needed, as an exception local congregation donations can be used to cover local approved expenses, including getting food for any very needy ones in the congregation. It is better to provide supplies to families rather than cash.—*od* chap. 12 pars. 12-15.
- **Disaster Relief Committees:** Disaster Relief Committees have been appointed throughout the country to pre-empt any emergency situation and help families prepare where needed. If families or individuals are in need and their extended believing family, congregation or circuit cannot promptly assist, then elders can contact the DRC with details of the publishers and their needs. A listing of DRCs will shortly be published online and will be available to your circuit overseer. —*sfl* chap. 26 pars. 7-12.
- **Health and hygiene.** Continue to highlight to publishers the importance of proper hygiene and staying distant (at least 2 meters) from ones who are not part of the household or who are ill. You may wish to refer to the health and hygiene advice in the previous announcement “Protecting Those You Love”. Please provide a copy of the announcement below to publishers and a copy of the advisory document.

# Announcement

April 15, 2020

## FOR THE CONGREGATION

**Caring for Your Family During the COVID-19 Pandemic:** At Proverbs 21:5 the Bible states: “The plans of the diligent surely lead to success”. With the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Governing Body recognizes that the situation in many countries could suddenly deteriorate and access to some necessities of life may become very limited. There could be social unrest. It is important for family heads to work to assist those in their household organize a sufficient store of necessities such as food, water, medical supplies, and so forth. Rather than wait until shortages or problems arise it is better to anticipate challenges and prepare now.

- 1. Learn From What Has Happened Elsewhere:** Experience from other countries indicates that the COVID-19 virus can be spread by persons that do not appear to have symptoms. Often there is only a short time between when the first cases of the virus appear in a community and when things get to the point that it becomes difficult or impossible to purchase supplies. So our main goal in writing to you is to urge you to prepare now for what may or may not happen in the coming weeks in your territory. Therefore, please carefully consider the following and take action — now!
- 2. Prepare for lockdown.** Families should prepare now to stay for an extended period in their homes. Each should do what they can to have a reserve of nonperishable food, water, batteries, medicine, and similar items. You should collect these items in a way that does not draw undue attention and put you in harm’s way. In many locations, you may be able to plant vegetables or other simple crops for yourself. Be flexible in what you are prepared to eat and recognize the need to practice economy. Think how you can ration food and other supplies in a time of distress.
- 3. Budget Funds Wisely.** Families should immediately make a plan, a budget of essential items and how and where they can safely store these. Purchase supplies needed to last several weeks. You may need to purchase needed supplies over two or three separate occasions to avoid attracting attention. Do not advertise your preparations and activities on social media so as to avoid endangering yourself or others. If you or your family have a specific need that you are unable to meet or manage please speak to one of the congregation elders.—Matt. 10:16; Jer. 23:4.
- 4. Health and hygiene.** Continue to promote the importance of proper hygiene by example. Stay distant (at least 2 meters physical separation) from ones who are not part of the household or who are ill. Wash your hands thoroughly throughout the day, keep your home clean and disinfect items, furniture and clothing that you come in contact with. Limit your direct contact with others and to the extent possible avoid crowded places and public transport and other facilities. Please ask the el-

ders for access to the document “Protecting Those You Love” which is available in JW.ORG if you do not have a copy. Please review the information.

We do not know exactly what the coming months will bring. However, do you remember what Jehovah has said? “Do not be afraid . . . do not be anxious.” (Isa. 41:10) We have every reason to trust that Jehovah, as our loving Father will care for us. Certainly, He provides a rich table of spiritual food for us. (Ps. 23:5) We can also be confident that he monitors and will provide for our physical needs. (Mtt. 6:31, 32). Stay calm, act discreetly and trust in Him.—Isa. 30:15.