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THE WATCHTOWER

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

Study Articles 1, 2 PAGES 3-11

The first of these two articles will help you to analyze the nature of your prayers to Jehovah. The second is likely to help you find ways you can enrich your prayers because it encourages careful examination of petitions and expressions of praise and thankfulness recorded in the Bible.

Study Article 3 PAGES 13-17

As Christians, each one of us has a place in Jehovah's arrangement for true worship. This article discusses various ways in which we can show that we treasure our place in the Christian congregation.

Study Articles 4, 5 PAGES 20-29

Showing brotherly love is essential to the unity of the congregation. And being well-mannered is a great asset in the Christian ministry. These articles show how we can strengthen these two aspects of our lives.

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WHAT DO YOUR PRAYERS SAY ABOUT YOU?

"O Hearer of prayer, even to you people of all flesh will come."—PS. 65:2.

JEOHOVAH never turns a deaf ear to the petitions of his faithful servants. We can be confident that he hears us. Even if millions of Jehovah's Witnesses were to pray to God at the same time, not one would get a 'busy signal.'

² Confident that God heard his entreaties, the psalmist David sang: "O Hearer of prayer, even to you people of all flesh will come." (Ps. 65:2) David's prayers were answered because he was a loyal worshipper of Jehovah. We might well ask ourselves: 'Do my supplications show that I trust in Jehovah and that pure worship is of prime concern to me? What do my prayers say about me?'

Approach Jehovah With Humility

³ If our prayers are to be answered, we must approach God with humility. (Ps. 138:6) We should ask Jehovah to examine us, as David did when he said: "Search through me, O God, and know my heart. Examine me, and know my disquieting thoughts, and see whether there is in me any painful way, and lead me in the way of time indefinite." (Ps. 139:23, 24) Let us not only pray but also submit to God's examination and the counsel of his Word. Jehovah can lead us in "the way of time indefinite," helping us to pursue a course leading to everlasting life.

1, 2. Why can Jehovah's servants confidently turn to him in prayer?

3, 4. (a) With what attitude should we approach God in prayer? (b) What should we do if we are troubled by "disquieting thoughts" regarding serious sin?

⁴ What if we are plagued by "disquieting thoughts" regarding a serious sin? (*Read Psalm 32:1-5.*) Trying to repress a guilty conscience can sap us of vigor, even as a tree loses moisture in summer's intense heat. Because of his sin, David lost his joy and may have become ill. But what relief confession to God brought him! Imagine David's joy when he felt that 'his revolt had been pardoned' and Jehovah had forgiven him. Confessing sin to God can bring relief, and the aid of Christian elders will also help to restore an erring person's spiritual health. —Prov. 28:13; Jas. 5:13-16.

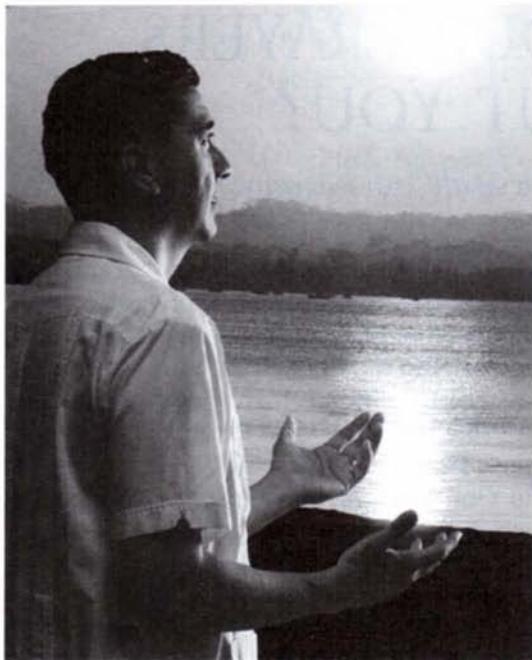
Supplicate God and Thank Him

⁵ If anxiety has a grip on us for any reason, we should apply Paul's counsel: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God." (Phil. 4:6) "To supplicate" means "to make a humble entreaty." Especially during danger or persecution should we beseech Jehovah for help and guidance.

⁶ If we prayed only when we needed something, however, what would that reveal about our motives? Paul said that we should make our petitions known to God "along with thanksgiving." We certainly have reason to express sentiments like those of David: "Yours, O Jehovah, are the greatness and the mightiness and the beauty and the

5. What does it mean to supplicate Jehovah?

6, 7. For what reasons should thanksgiving be included in our prayers?



Do you regularly praise and thank Jehovah?

excellency and the dignity; for everything in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Jehovah, the One also lifting yourself up as head over all. . . . O our God, we are thanking you and praising your beauteous name.”—1 Chron. 29:11-13.

⁷ Jesus thanked God for food and for the bread and wine used at the Lord’s Evening Meal. (Matt. 15:36; Mark 14:22, 23) Besides expressing similar gratitude, we should “give thanks to Jehovah” for “his wonderful works to the sons of men,” for his “righteous judicial decisions,” and for his word, or message, now available in the Bible.—Ps. 107:15; 119:62, 105.

Pray for Others

⁸ We undoubtedly pray for ourselves, but our prayers ought to include others—even

^{8, 9} Why should we pray for fellow Christians?

Christians we do not know by name. Though the apostle Paul may not have known all the believers in Colossae, he wrote: “We thank God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ always when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in connection with Christ Jesus and the love you have for all the holy ones.” (Col. 1:3, 4) Paul also prayed for Christians in Thessalonica. (2 Thess. 1:11, 12) Prayers of that kind say much about us and how we view our brothers and sisters in the faith.

⁹ Our prayers for anointed Christians and for their “other sheep” companions give evidence of our concern for God’s organization. (John 10:16) Paul asked fellow worshippers to pray so that ‘ability to speak might be given him to make known the sacred secret of the good news.’ (Eph. 6:17-20) Do we personally pray for other Christians in that way?

¹⁰ Praying for others may change our attitude toward them. If we are not particularly fond of a person but we pray for him, how can we be unloving toward that person? (1 John 4:20, 21) Prayers of this kind are up-building and promote unity with our brothers. Moreover, such prayers indicate that we have Christlike love. (John 13:34, 35) That quality is part of the fruitage of God’s spirit. Do we individually pray for holy spirit, asking Jehovah to help us display its fruitage of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, and self-control? (Luke 11:13; Gal. 5:22, 23) If so, our words and deeds will show that we are walking and living by spirit.—*Read Galatians 5:16, 25.*

¹¹ If we learn that our children are being tempted to cheat on tests at school, we should pray for them and also give them

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10. Praying for others may have what effect on us?
 11. Why would you say that it is proper to ask others to pray for us?

Scriptural help so that they will act honestly and will not do anything wrong. Paul told Christians in Corinth: "We pray to God that you may do nothing wrong." (2 Cor. 13:7) Humble prayers of that kind please Jehovah and speak well of us. (*Read Proverbs 15:8*) We can ask that others pray for us, even as the apostle Paul did. "Carry on prayer for us," he wrote, "for we trust we have an honest conscience, as we wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things."—Heb. 13:18.

Our Prayers Say Even More

¹² Do our prayers say that we are happy and zealous Witnesses of Jehovah? Are our supplications focused chiefly on compliance with God's will, the preaching of the Kingdom message, the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty, and the sanctification of his name? These should be significant features of our prayers, as indicated by Jesus' model prayer, which begins with the words: "Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth."—Matt. 6:9, 10.

¹³ Our prayers to God reveal our motives, interests, and desires. Jehovah knows what we are inside. Says Proverbs 17:3: "The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but Jehovah is the examiner of hearts." God sees what is in our heart. (1 Sam. 16:7) He knows how we feel about our meetings, our ministry, and our spiritual brothers and sisters. Jehovah is aware of what we think of Christ's "brothers." (Matt. 25:40) He knows whether we really desire what we pray for or we are merely repeating a set of words. "When praying," said Jesus, "do not say the same things over and over again, just as the

12. What should be significant features of our prayers?

13, 14. Our prayers reveal what about us?

people of the nations do, for they [wrongly] imagine they will get a hearing for their use of many words."—Matt. 6:7.

¹⁴ Our expressions in prayer also reveal how much we rely on God. "You [Jehovah] have proved to be a refuge for me," said David, "a strong tower in the face of the enemy. I will be a guest in your tent for times indefinite; I will take refuge in the concealment of your wings." (Ps. 61:3, 4) When God figuratively 'spreads his tent over us,' we enjoy security and his protective care. (Rev. 7:15) How comforting it is to draw close to Jehovah in prayer with the conviction that he is 'on our side' during any test of our faith! —*Read Psalm 118:5-9.*

¹⁵ Honest prayer to Jehovah regarding our motives can help us to discern the truth about them. For instance, is eagerness to serve in a position of oversight among God's people really a humble desire to be helpful and to do the most we can for the advancement of Kingdom interests? Or could it be that we want to have "the first place" or even wish to "lord it over" others? That is not the way things are to be among Jehovah's people. (*Read 3 John 9, 10; Luke 22:24-27*) If we have wrong desires, honesty in praying to Jehovah God can expose them and help us

15, 16. Prayer may help us to discern what about our desire to reach out for service privileges?

How Would You Answer?

- With what attitude should we approach Jehovah in prayer?
- Why should we pray for fellow believers?
- Our prayers may reveal what about us and our motives?
- How should we comport ourselves during public prayer?



Our demeanor during public prayer should always honor Jehovah

publicly, and it is good to consider how this can be done in a proper manner.

¹⁸ At our meetings, loyal men represent the congregation in public prayer. (1 Tim. 2:8) Fellow believers should be able to say "amen," meaning "so be it," at the end of such a prayer. To do so, however, they must agree with what was said. There is nothing shocking or tactless about Jesus' model prayer. (Luke 11:2-4) Moreover, he did not itemize all the needs

to change before they become firmly entrenched.

¹⁶ Christian wives may have a keen desire that their husbands serve as ministerial servants and perhaps eventually as overseers, or elders. These sisters may work along with the feelings they express in their private prayers by striving to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner. This is important, for the speech and conduct of a man's family have a bearing on how he is viewed in the congregation.

Representing Others in Public Prayer

¹⁷ Jesus often withdrew from the crowds in order to pray to his Father privately. (Matt. 14:13; Luke 5:16; 6:12) We have the same need for solitude. In calm prayer under peaceful conditions, we are likely to make decisions that please Jehovah and are in our best spiritual interests. However, Jesus also prayed

17. Why is solitude desirable when we pray privately?

or problems of each person in his audience. Personal concerns are suitable subjects for *private*, not *public*, prayer. And when representing a group in prayer, we should refrain from including confidential matters.

¹⁹ When we are being represented in public prayer, we need to display reverential "fear of God." (1 Pet. 2:17) There may be a proper time and place for some actions that would be inappropriate at a Christian meeting. (Eccl. 3:1) For instance, suppose someone sought to have all in a group link arms or hold hands during such a prayer. This might offend or distract some, including visitors who do not share our beliefs. Some marriage mates might discreetly hold hands, but if they embraced each other during public prayer, those who got a glimpse of such conduct might be stumbled. They might

18. What are some points that brothers should keep in mind when representing a congregation in public prayer?

19. How should we comport ourselves during public prayer?

think or get the impression that the couple was focusing on their romantic relationship instead of reverence for Jehovah. Out of deep respect for him, let us therefore "do all things for God's glory" and avoid conduct that could distract, shock, or stumble anyone.—1 Cor. 10:31, 32; 2 Cor. 6:3.

Pray for What?

²⁰ At times, we may not know what to say in our private prayers. "The problem of what we should pray for as we need to we do not know," wrote Paul, "but the [holy] spirit itself pleads for us with groanings unuttered. Yet he [God] who searches the hearts knows what the meaning of the spirit is." (Rom. 8:26, 27) Jehovah caused many prayers to be recorded in the Scriptures. He accepts these

20. How would you explain Romans 8:26, 27?

inspired petitions as requests we would like to make and therefore fulfills them. God knows us and the meaning of the things he caused his spirit to speak through the Bible writers. Jehovah answers our supplications when the spirit "pleads," or intercedes, for us. But as we become better acquainted with God's Word, what we should pray for may more readily come to mind.

²¹ As we have noted, our prayers do say much about us. For instance, they may reveal how close we have drawn to Jehovah and how well we know his Word. (Jas. 4:8) In the next article, we will examine some prayers and prayerful expressions recorded in the Bible. What effect is such an examination of the Scriptures likely to have on our approach to God in prayer?

21. What will we examine in the next article?

ENRICH YOUR PRAYERS THROUGH BIBLE STUDY

"Ah, Jehovah, please, let your ear become attentive to the prayer of your servant."—NEH. 1:11.

PRAIER and Bible study are essential features of true worship. (1 Thess. 5:17; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17) Of course, the Bible is not a prayer book. Yet, it does contain numerous prayers, including many found in the book of Psalms.

² As you read and study the Bible, you are likely to find prayers that fit situations you encounter. In fact, when you incorporate prayerful thoughts recorded in the Scriptures, your prayers are enriched. What can

1, 2. Why will it be beneficial to consider some prayers recorded in the Bible?

you learn from those whose pleas for help were answered and from the content of their prayers?

Seek and Follow God's Guidance

³ Bible study makes it evident that you should always pray for God's guidance. Consider what happened when the patriarch Abraham sent his eldest servant—likely Eliezer—to Mesopotamia to obtain a

3, 4. What was the mission of Abraham's servant, and what can be learned from the outcome that Jehovah gave?



Abraham's servant prayed for God's guidance. Do you?

God-fearing wife for Isaac. As women drew water at a certain well, the servant prayed: "Jehovah . . . , what must occur is that the young woman to whom I shall say, 'Let your water jar down, please, that I may take a drink,' and who will indeed say, 'Take a drink, and I shall also water your camels,' this is the one you must assign to your servant, to Isaac; and by this let me know that you have performed loyal love with my master."—Gen. 24:12-14.

⁴ The prayer of Abraham's servant was answered when Rebekah watered his camels. She soon accompanied him to Canaan and became Isaac's beloved wife. Of course, you cannot expect God to give you a special sign. Yet, he will guide you in life if you pray and are determined to be led by his spirit.—Gal. 5:18.

Prayer Helps to Allay Anxiety

⁵ Prayer can reduce anxiety. Fearing danger from his twin brother, Esau, Jacob prayed: "O Jehovah, . . . I am unworthy of all the loving-kindnesses and of all the faithfulness that you have exercised toward your ser-

5, 6. What is noteworthy about Jacob's prayer when he was about to meet Esau?

vant . . . Deliver me, I pray you, from my brother's hand, from Esau's hand, because I am afraid of him that he may come and certainly assault me, mother together with children. And you, you have said, 'Unquestionably I shall deal well with you and I will constitute your seed like the grains of sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'”—Gen. 32:9-12.

⁶ Although Jacob took precautionary steps, his prayer was answered when he and Esau were reconciled. (Gen. 33:1-4) Read that petition carefully, and you will see that Jacob did not just plead for help. He expressed faith in the promised Seed and gratitude for God's loving-kindness. Do you have some "fears within"? (2 Cor. 7:5) If so, Jacob's entreaty may remind you that prayers can allay anxiety. However, they should contain not only requests but also expressions of faith.

Pray for Wisdom

⁷ A desire to please Jehovah should motivate you to pray for wisdom. Moses prayed for knowledge of God's ways. "See," he pleaded, "you [Jehovah] are saying to me, 'Lead this people up [from Egypt]' . . . And now, if, please, I have found favor in your eyes, make me know, please, your ways, . . . in order that I may find favor in your eyes." (Ex. 33:12, 13) In response, God gave Moses greater knowledge of His ways—a necessity if he was to take the lead among Jehovah's people.

⁸ David also prayed: "Make me know your own ways, O Jehovah." (Ps. 25:4) David's

7. Why did Moses pray for knowledge of Jehovah's ways?

8. How might you benefit from meditating on 1 Kings 3:7-14?

son Solomon entreated God for the wisdom required to discharge the duties of kingship in Israel. Solomon's prayer pleased Jehovah, who gave him not only what he requested but also riches and glory. (*Read 1 Kings 3:7-14.*) If you receive service privileges that seem overwhelming, pray for wisdom and display a humble spirit. Then God will help you to acquire the knowledge and exercise the wisdom needed to care for your responsibilities in a proper and loving manner.

Pray From the Heart

⁹ To be heard, prayer must come from the heart. Solomon offered a heartfelt prayer, recorded at 1 Kings chapter 8, before throngs assembled in Jerusalem for the inauguration of Jehovah's temple in 1026 B.C.E. After the ark of the covenant was placed in the Most Holy and Jehovah's cloud filled the temple, Solomon praised God.

¹⁰ Study Solomon's prayer, and note its references to the heart. Solomon acknowledged that Jehovah alone knows a person's heart. (1 Ki. 8:38, 39) The same prayer shows that there is hope for a sinner who 'returns to God with all his heart.' If an enemy captured God's people, their pleas would be heard if their heart was complete with Jehovah. (1 Ki. 8:48, 58, 61) Surely, then, your prayers should come from the heart.

How the Psalms Can Enrich Your Prayers

¹¹ Studying the Psalms can enrich your prayers and help you to wait for God to answer them. Consider the patience of an exiled Levite. Although he could not go to Je-

9, 10. What do you find significant about Solomon's references to the heart in his prayer at the temple's inauguration?

11, 12. What have you learned from the prayerful expression of a certain Levite who could not go to God's sanctuary for a time?

hovah's sanctuary for a time, he sang: "Why are you in despair, O my soul, and why are you boisterous within me? Wait for God, for I shall yet laud him as the grand salvation of my person and as my God."—Ps. 42:5, 11; 43:5.

¹² What can you learn from that Levite? If imprisonment for righteousness' sake were to prevent you from being with fellow believers in their place of worship for a time, wait patiently for God to act in your behalf. (Ps. 37:5) Meditate on past joys in God's service, and pray for endurance while you "wait for God" to restore you to active association with his people.

Pray in Faith

¹³ Regardless of your circumstances, always pray in faith. If you are facing a test of integrity, follow the counsel of the disciple James. Turn to Jehovah in prayer, and do not doubt that he can give you the wisdom needed to cope with your trial. (*Read James 1:5-8.*) God is aware of any disturbing thoughts you may have, and he can guide and comfort you by means of his spirit. Open your heart to him in full faith, "not doubting at all," and accept the guidance of his spirit and the counsel of his Word.

¹⁴ Hannah, one of the Levite Elkanah's two wives, prayed and acted in faith. Childless Hannah was taunted by the other wife, Peninnah, who bore several children. At the tabernacle, Hannah vowed that if she bore a son, she would give him to Jehovah. Because her lips quivered while she prayed, High Priest Eli thought she was drunk. Learning that this was not so, he said: "May the God of Israel grant your petition." Although Hannah did not know exactly what the outcome

13. In harmony with James 1:5-8, why should you pray in faith?

14, 15. Why can it be said that Hannah prayed and acted in faith?

would be, she had faith that her prayer would be answered. Therefore, "her face became self-concerned no more." She was no longer sad or downcast.—1 Sam. 1:9-18.

¹⁵ After the birth and weaning of Samuel, Hannah presented him to Jehovah for sacred service at the tabernacle. (1 Sam. 1:19-28) Taking time to meditate on her prayer on that occasion may well enrich your own prayers and help you to see that even sadness over a distressing problem can be overcome if you pray in faith that Jehovah will answer you.—1 Sam. 2:1-10.

¹⁶ The upright man Nehemiah of the fifth century B.C.E. prayed and acted in faith. He pleaded: "Ah, Jehovah, please, let your ear become attentive to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants who take delight in fearing your name; and, please, do grant success to your servant today and make him an object of pity before this man." Who was "this man"? It was Persian King Artaxerxes, whom Nehemiah served as cupbearer.—Neh. 1:11.

¹⁷ Nehemiah prayed in faith for days after learning that Jews released from Babylonian captivity were "in a very bad plight and in reproach; and the wall of Jerusalem [was]

16, 17. What happened because Nehemiah prayed and acted in faith?

broken down." (Neh. 1:3, 4) Nehemiah's prayers were answered beyond his expectations when King Artaxerxes allowed him to go to Jerusalem to rebuild its wall. (Neh. 2:1-8) Before long the wall had been repaired. Nehemiah's prayers were answered because they focused on true worship and were offered in faith. Is that true of your prayers?

Remember Praise and Thanksgiving

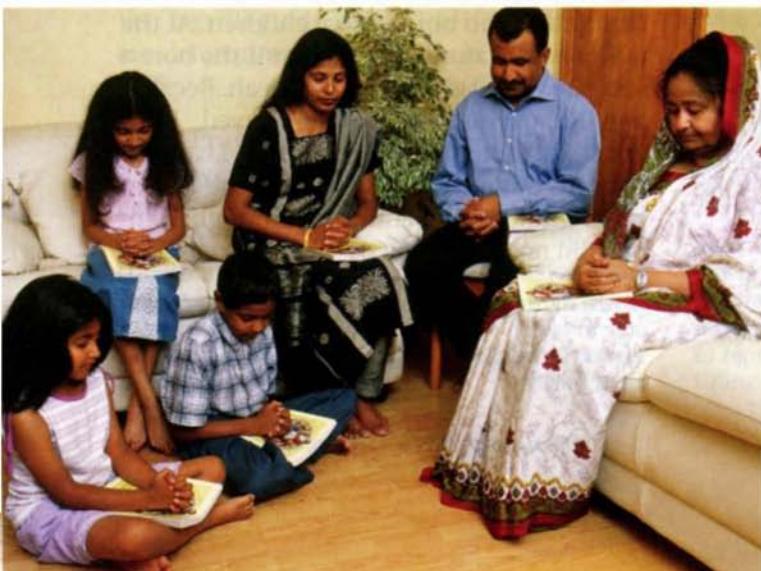
¹⁸ In prayer, remember to praise and thank Jehovah. There are so many reasons to do so! For example, David was eager to extol Jehovah's kingship. (*Read Psalm 145:10-13.*) Do your prayers show that you appreciate the privilege of announcing Jehovah's Kingdom? Words of the psalmists may also help you to express to God in heartfelt prayer your gratitude for Christian meetings, assemblies, and conventions.—Ps. 27:4; 122:1.

¹⁹ Gratitude for your precious relationship with God may move you to pray from the heart with thoughts like these: "I shall laud you among the peoples, O Jehovah; I shall make melody to you among the national groups. For your loving-kindness is great up to the heavens, and your trueness up to the skies. Do be exalted above the heavens, O God; let your glory be above all the earth." (Ps. 57:9-11) What heartwarming sentiments! Do you not agree that such touching words from the Psalms can affect and enrich your prayers?

Beseech God With Reverence

²⁰ Reverence for God should be evident in your prayers. The reverential words of Mary shortly after learning that she would be the

18, 19. For what reasons should a servant of Jehovah praise and thank him?
20. How did Mary express her devotion to God?



*Family Worship
can enrich your prayers*

mother of the Messiah were similar to those of Hannah when she was presenting young Samuel for tabernacle service. Mary's reverence for God is obvious in her words: "My soul magnifies Jehovah, and my spirit cannot keep from being overjoyed at God my Savior." (Luke 1:46, 47) Could your prayers be enhanced by expressing similar sentiments? No wonder godly Mary was chosen to be the mother of Jesus the Messiah!

²¹ Jesus prayed reverently in full faith. Before he resurrected Lazarus, for instance, "Jesus raised his eyes heavenward and said: 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. True, I knew that you always hear me.'" (John 11:41, 42) Do your prayers give evidence of such reverence and faith? Study Jesus' reverential model prayer, and you will see that particularly significant features of it are the sanctification of Jehovah's name, the coming of his Kingdom, and the accomplishment of his will. (Matt. 6:9, 10) Think about your own prayers. Do they reflect your keen interest in Jehovah's Kingdom, in the doing of his will, and in the sanctification of his holy name? They should.

²² Because of persecution or other trials, prayer often includes pleas for help to serve Jehovah with courage. When the Sanhedrin ordered Peter and John to stop 'teaching upon the basis of Jesus' name,' those apostles courageously refused to quit. (Acts 4:18-20) After being released, they told fellow believers what had happened. Then all those present petitioned God for help in speaking his word with boldness. How thrilling it must have been when that prayer was answered, for they were "filled with the holy spirit and were speaking the word of God with boldness"! (*Read Acts 4:24-31.*) As a re-

21. How did the prayers of Jesus give evidence of reverence and faith?

22. Why can you be sure that Jehovah will give you courage to declare the good news?

sult, multitudes became worshippers of Jehovah. Prayer can also strengthen you to declare the good news boldly.

Keep On Enriching Your Prayers

²³ Many other examples could be cited to show that Bible reading and study can enrich your prayers. Like Jonah, for instance, in prayer you can acknowledge that "salvation belongs to Jehovah." (Jonah 2:1-10) If you are troubled over a serious sin and have sought help from the elders, the prayerful sentiments of David may help you to express your repentance during personal prayers. (Ps. 51:1-12) In certain prayers, you can praise Jehovah as Jeremiah did. (Jer. 32:16-19) If you are seeking a marriage mate, studying the prayer found in Ezra chapter 9, coupled with personal entreaty, can strengthen your determination to obey God by 'marrying only in the Lord.'—1 Cor. 7:39; Ezra 9:6, 10-15.

²⁴ Keep on reading, studying, and searching the Bible. Look for points you can include in your prayers. You may be able to weave Scriptural thoughts into your supplications and prayers of thanks and praise. You are sure to draw ever closer to Jehovah God as you enrich your prayers through Bible study.

23, 24. (a) Cite other examples showing how Bible study can enrich your prayers. (b) What will you do to enrich your prayers?

How Would You Answer?

- Why should we seek and follow God's guidance?
- What should motivate us to pray for wisdom?
- How can the book of Psalms enrich our prayers?
- Why should we pray in faith and with reverence?

Questions From Readers

Is it appropriate for a sister to wear a head covering when interpreting Bible discourses into sign language at Christian meetings, assemblies, or conventions?

Generally speaking, a Christian woman ought to wear a head covering when she cares for matters that are normally the responsibility of her husband or a brother in the congregation. This is in harmony with the principle stated by the apostle Paul that "every woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered shames her head" because "the head of a woman is the man." (1 Cor. 11:3-10) When a sister wears a modest and appropriate head covering in such situations, it is a sign of submission to the theocratic arrangement in the Christian congregation.—1 Tim. 2:11, 12.*

* For a detailed discussion of the topic of head coverings for Christian women, see pages 209 to 212 of "Keep Yourselves in God's Love."

What, though, of situations in which a sister interprets into sign language for a brother who is delivering a discourse? True, the sister is merely acting as a linguistic intermediary. That is to say, the teaching is not her own but that of the brother for whom she is interpreting. However, sign-language interpretation is very different from interpretation between spoken languages. With spoken languages, the audience can focus on the speaker and still listen to the interpreter. Also, unlike sign-language interpretation, sisters who interpret spoken languages are usually not situated so prominently. At times, they may even have the option of being seated while interpreting or, if they are standing, of facing the speaker rather than the audience. So it would not be necessary for a sister interpreting into a spoken language to wear a head covering.



In addition to this, because of developments in the technology used when talks are interpreted into sign language, the interpreter's role may become even more magnified. An image of the signer's interpretation is commonly featured on a large screen, while the speaker himself may not even be visible to the audience. With these factors in mind, it would thus seem appropriate for the sister who interprets into sign language to acknowledge her secondary role as an interpreter by wearing a head covering.

How does this revised direction affect the interpretation into sign language of parts on the Theocratic Ministry School, demonstrations, and comments during the Congregation Bible Study, the Service Meeting, and the Watchtower Study? Should a sister who is a sign-language interpreter on such

occasions also wear a head covering? It would appear that the sister's use of a head covering in *some* circumstances is not necessary, since all in attendance should be able to appreciate that she is not actually conducting the meeting. This would be the case, for example, when she interprets comments from the audience, talks given by sisters, or demonstrations. However, when interpreting talks for brothers during these meetings, when interpreting for the Watchtower Study conductor or the conductor of the Congregation Bible Study, or when taking the lead in signing songs, she should wear a head covering. During the course of a meeting, a sister may have to interpret for brothers, sisters, children, and elders. In view of this, it may be more practical to wear a head covering during the entire meeting.

TREASURE YOUR PLACE IN THE CONGREGATION

"God has set the members in the body, each one of them, just as he pleased."—1 COR. 12:18.

SINCE the days of ancient Israel, the congregation has been Jehovah's arrangement for nourishing his people spiritually and giving them direction. After the Israelites overthrew the city of Ai, for example, Joshua "read aloud all the words of the law, the blessing and the malediction, according to all that is written in the book of the law...:

1, 2. (a) What shows that everyone in the congregation can have a place he can cherish? (b) What questions will be considered in this article?

in front of all the congregation of Israel." —Josh. 8:34, 35.

² In the first century C.E., the apostle Paul told the Christian elder Timothy that the Christian congregation was "God's household" and "a pillar and support of the truth." (1 Tim. 3:15) God's "household" today is the worldwide brotherhood of true Christians. In chapter 12 of his first inspired letter to the Corinthians, Paul likens the congregation to a human body. He says that

even though each member serves a different function, all are necessary. "God has set the members in the body," writes Paul, "each one of them, just as he pleased." He even points out that "the parts of the body which we think to be less honorable, these we surround with more abundant honor." (1 Cor. 12:18, 23) Hence, the role of one upright person in God's household is neither better nor worse than that of another faithful Christian. It is simply different. How, then, can we find our place within God's arrangement and treasure, or cherish, it? What factors may affect the place that we occupy? And how can we make 'our advancement manifest to all persons'?—1 Tim. 4:15.

Cherish Our Place—How?

³ One way to find our place in the congregation and give evidence that we treasure it is to cooperate fully with "the faithful and discreet slave" and its representative Governing Body. (*Read Matthew 24:45-47.*) We need to examine our response to the direction we receive from the slave class. Over the years, for example, we have received pointed direction on dress and grooming, entertainment, and improper use of the Internet. Do we carefully heed this good counsel so that we are spiritually protected? What about the admonition to establish a regular routine of family worship? Have we taken the advice to heart and set aside an evening for that purpose? If we are single, are we making time for personal study of the Scriptures? Jehovah will bless us individually and as families if we follow the guidance of the slave class.

⁴ Some might reason that areas such as entertainment and dress and grooming are personal matters. For the dedicated

3. What is one way to find our place in the congregation and show that we treasure it?

4. What should we take into consideration when making personal choices?

Christian who cherishes his place in the congregation, though, personal preferences should not be the sole determining factor when making decisions. Consideration must especially be given to Jehovah's viewpoint as revealed through his Word, the Bible. Its message should prove to be 'a lamp to our foot, and a light to our roadway.' (Ps. 119:105) We are wise also to consider how the choices we make in personal matters affect our ministry and other people, both inside and outside the congregation.—*Read 2 Corinthians 6:3, 4.*

⁵ "The spirit that now operates in the sons of disobedience" is so widespread that it is like the air we breathe. (Eph. 2:2) That spirit can cause us to think that we do not need guidance from Jehovah's organization. Surely we do not want to be like Diotrephes, who would not 'receive anything from the apostle John with respect.' (3 John 9, 10) We need to guard against developing a spirit of independence. By word or action, may we never challenge the channel of communication that Jehovah is using today. (Num. 16: 1-3) On the contrary, we should cherish our privilege to cooperate with the slave class. And should we not strive to be obedient and submissive to those taking the lead in our local congregation?—*Read Hebrews 13:7, 17.*

⁶ Another way to show that we cherish our place in the congregation is by closely examining our personal circumstances and doing all we can to 'glorify our ministry' and bring honor to Jehovah. (Rom. 11:13) Some are able to be regular pioneers. Others serve in such special forms of full-time service as missionaries, traveling overseers, and members of Bethel families throughout the

5. Why should we guard against the spirit of independence?

6. Why should we examine our personal circumstances?

world. Many brothers and sisters assist with Kingdom Hall construction. The great majority of Jehovah's people are doing their best to care for the spiritual needs of their families and have a full share in the ministry each week. (*Read Colossians 3:23, 24.*) We can be confident that when we offer ourselves willingly in God's service and do our best to serve him whole-souled, there is always a place for us in his arrangement.

Factors That Make a Difference

⁷ It is important to scrutinize our circumstances because, to some extent, our place in the congregation depends on what we are able to do or are in a position to do. For example, the place a brother occupies in the congregation differs in some respects from that of a sister. Age, health, and other factors also influence what we are able to do in Jehovah's service. "The beauty of young men is their power," states Proverbs 20:29, "and the splendor of old men is their gray-headedness." Younger members of the congregation may be able to do more physically because of their youthful energy, whereas older ones benefit the congregation greatly because of their wisdom and experience. We also need to bear in mind that anything we are able to do in Jehovah's organization depends on God's undeserved kindness.—Acts 14:26; Rom. 12:6-8.

⁸ An illustration of two young fleshly sisters highlights another factor that comes into play in determining the place we will occupy in the congregation. Both graduate from high school. They have the same circumstances. Their parents have done their best to encourage both of them to reach out for the regular pioneer service after

7. Explain how our circumstances can affect the place we occupy in the congregation.

8. What bearing does desire have on what we do in the congregation?

graduation. After graduating, one enters the pioneer service, whereas the other begins working secularly full-time. What made the difference? It was desire. In the end, each did what she wanted to do. Is that not true with most of us? We need to think seriously about what we would like to do in God's service. Can we increase the share we are having in it, even if that means adjusting our circumstances?—2 Cor. 9:7.

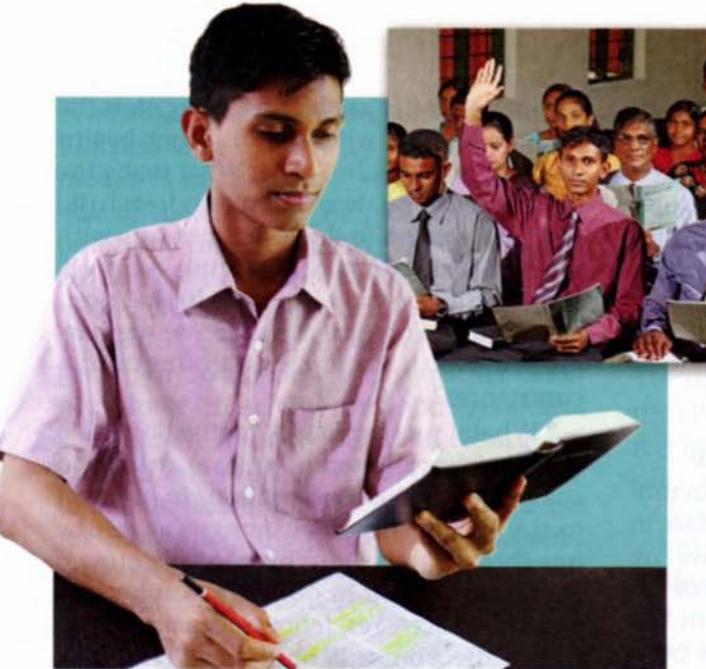
⁹ What if we simply lack motivation to do more in Jehovah's service and are inclined to coast along in the congregation? In his letter to the Philippians, Paul states: "God is the one that, for the sake of his good pleasure, is acting within you in order for you both to will and to act." Yes, Jehovah can act within us and affect our will, or desires.—Phil. 2:13; 4:13.

¹⁰ Should we not, then, ask Jehovah to make us want to do his will? King David of ancient Israel did just that. He prayed: "Make me know your own ways, O Jehovah; teach me your own paths. Make me walk in your truth and teach me, for you are my God of salvation. In you I have hoped all day long." (Ps. 25:4, 5) We can do the same by praying that Jehovah will make us want to do what

9, 10. What should we do if we lack the motivation to do more in Jehovah's service?

Do You Recall?

- Why is it reasonable to conclude that all Christians have a place in the congregation?
- How do we show that we cherish our place in God's organization?
- What factors can affect our place in the congregation?
- How can Christian youths and adults demonstrate that they treasure their place in God's arrangement?



How can brothers reach out for privileges in the congregation?

(1 Tim. 3:1-10, 12, 13; Titus 1:5-9) How can a brother strive to meet such Scriptural requirements? By having an active share in the ministry, by diligently caring for his congregation assignments, by working hard to improve the quality of his comments at Christian meetings, and by taking a personal interest in fellow believers. He thus shows that he treasures his place in the congregation.

¹² What can young brothers, especially those in their teens, do to make advancement in the congregation? They can put forth effort to grow in "wisdom and spiritual comprehension" by taking in knowledge of the Scriptures. (Col. 1:9) Being diligent students of God's Word and having an active share in congregation meetings will certainly contribute to that end. Young men can also reach out by working to qualify to enter the "large door that leads to activity" in various features of full-time service. (1 Cor. 16:9) Pursuing a career in Jehovah's service is a truly satisfying way of life and a course that results in rich blessings.—*Read Ecclesiastes 12:1.*

¹³ Sisters too can demonstrate that they treasure their privilege of personally participating in the fulfillment of Psalm 68:11. There we read: "Jehovah himself gives the saying; the women telling the good news are a large army." One of the most notable ways by which sisters can show their gratitude for their place in the congregation is by partici-

11. (a) What need is there for brothers to reach out for responsibilities in the organization? (b) How can a brother reach out for service privileges?

12. How can youths demonstrate their zeal for the truth?
13, 14. In what ways can sisters demonstrate that they cherish their role in the congregation?

pating in the disciple-making work. (Matt. 28:19, 20) Hence, by having a full share in the ministry and by willingly making sacrifices for that work, sisters prove that they treasure their role in the congregation.

¹⁴ In writing to Titus, Paul stated: “Let the aged women be reverent in behavior, . . . teachers of what is good; that they may recall the young women to their senses to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sound in mind, chaste, workers at home, good, subjecting themselves to their own husbands, so that the word of God may not be spoken of abusively.” (Titus 2:3-5) What a force for good the mature sisters in the congregation can be! By respecting the brothers who take the lead and by making wise decisions in such areas of life as dress and grooming and entertainment, they set a fine example for others and show a high regard for their own place in the congregation.

¹⁵ At times, it may be difficult for an unmarried sister to find her place in the congregation. One sister who has experienced this stated: “A life of singleness can occasionally be a lonely one.” When asked how she copes with the situation, she said: “Prayer and study help me to find my place again. I study about how Jehovah views me. Then I reach out to try to be helpful to others in the congregation. This helps me to get my mind off myself.” According to Psalm 32:8, Jehovah told David: “I will give advice with my eye upon you.” Yes, Jehovah takes a personal interest in all of his servants, including single sisters, and he will help all to find their place in the congregation.

15. What might a single sister do to cope with loneliness?

Keep Your Place!

¹⁶ Jehovah has lovingly drawn each of his servants into a relationship with him. Jesus said: “No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him.” (John 6:44) Out of all the billions of people on the earth, Jehovah has extended a personal invitation to us to be a part of his congregation today. Accepting this invitation was the best decision we ever made. It has given our life purpose and meaning. And what joy and satisfaction we experience because we have a place in the congregation!

¹⁷ “Jehovah, I have loved the dwelling of your house,” said the psalmist. He also sang: “My own foot will certainly stand on a level place; among the congregated throngs I shall bless Jehovah.” (Ps. 26:8, 12) The true God has a place for each of us in his organization. By continuing to follow theocratic direction and by staying busy in God’s service, we can keep our precious place in Jehovah’s arrangement.

16, 17. (a) Why is accepting Jehovah’s invitation to be part of his organization the best decision we can make? (b) How can we keep our place in Jehovah’s organization?

How can sisters demonstrate that they treasure their place in the congregation?



Cheerful Giving From the Heart

IN THE matter of giving, the apostle Paul wrote: "Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart," and he added: "Not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9:7) Jehovah does not compel anyone to support pure worship. He allows his servants to show their devotion by their voluntary and cheerful giving. Throughout history, his people have responded enthusiastically. Consider three examples.

After Jehovah led the Israelites out of Egypt, he directed that they construct the tabernacle. Materials were needed, so the people of Israel were invited to contribute. In response, "everyone whose heart impelled him" brought gold and silver, jewelry, and other materials. The people were so generous that an announcement was made requesting that the giving stop.—Ex. 35:5, 21; 36:6, 7.

When the temple was to be constructed centuries later, God's people again had the

WAYS IN WHICH SOME CHOOSE TO GIVE

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WORLDWIDE WORK

Many set aside, or budget, an amount that they place in the contribution boxes labeled "Worldwide Work."

Each month, congregations forward these amounts to the office of Jehovah's Witnesses that serves their respective countries. Voluntary donations of money may also be sent directly to Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., Attention Treasurer's Office, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201-2483, or to the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses that serves your country. (Voluntary donations specified in the sections below can also be sent to the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses that serves your country.) Checks sent to the above address should be made payable to "Watchtower." Jewelry or other valuables may be donated as well. A brief letter stating that such items are an outright gift should accompany these contributions.

CONDITIONAL-DONATION TRUST ARRANGEMENT

Money may be placed in trust with Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania

for use worldwide. However, upon request the funds will be returned. For more information, please contact the Treasurer's Office by writing to the address noted above or by telephoning (718) 560-7500.

CHARITABLE PLANNING

In addition to outright gifts of money, there are other methods of giving to benefit Kingdom service worldwide. These include:

Insurance: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania may be named as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or a retirement/pension plan.

Bank Accounts: Bank accounts, certificates of deposit, or individual retirement accounts may be placed in trust for or made payable on death to Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, in accord with local bank requirements.

Stocks and Bonds: Stocks and bonds may be donated to Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania as an outright gift or Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania may be named as a Transfer on Death beneficiary.

Real Estate: Salable real estate may be donated either by making an outright gift or, in the

opportunity to show their support for pure worship. King David made a large personal contribution toward the project and invited others to participate in giving. They did so eagerly. Why, the contribution of gold and silver alone was worth more than 100 billion dollars at current values! The people rejoiced over their making voluntary offerings to Jehovah.—1 Chron. 29:3-9; 2 Chron. 5:1.

A joyful spirit of giving was likewise shown by the early followers of Jesus Christ. On the day of Pentecost 33 C.E., about 3,000 were baptized, many of whom were not resi-

dents of Jerusalem. To enable those of little means to remain in the city to learn more about their new faith, there was a temporary pooling of financial resources. The brothers sold possessions and brought the money to the apostles to assist those who were in need. How Jehovah must have rejoiced to observe such an expression of faith and love!—Acts 2:41-47.

Today, Christians continue to support pure worship by generously and cheerfully giving of their time, energy, and funds. The accompanying box sets out some ways in which you can do this.

case of residential property, by reserving a life estate to the donor, who can continue to live therein during his or her lifetime. Contact the branch office in your country before deeding any real estate.

Gift Annuity: A gift annuity is an arrangement whereby one transfers money or securities to a designated corporation that is used by Jehovah's Witnesses. In exchange, the donor, or someone designated by the donor, receives a specified annuity payment every year for life. The donor receives an income-tax deduction for the year in which the gift annuity is established.

Wills and Trusts: Property or money may be bequeathed to Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania by means of a legally executed will, or Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania may be named as beneficiary of a trust agreement. A trust benefiting a religious organization may provide certain tax advantages.

As the term "charitable planning" implies, these types of donations typically require some planning on the part of the donor. To assist individuals desiring to benefit the worldwide work of Jehovah's Witnesses through some

form of charitable planning, a brochure has been prepared in English and Spanish entitled *Charitable Planning to Benefit Kingdom Service Worldwide*. The brochure was written to provide information on a variety of ways that gifts may be made either now or through a bequest at death. After reading the brochure and conferring with their own legal or tax advisers, many have been able to help support our religious and humanitarian activities worldwide and maximize their tax benefits while doing so. This brochure may be obtained by requesting a copy directly from the Charitable Planning Office.

For more information, you may contact the Charitable Planning Office, either in writing or by telephone, at the address listed below, or you may contact the branch office that serves your country.

Charitable Planning Office

Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
of Pennsylvania
100 Watchtower Drive
Patterson, New York 12563-9204
Telephone: (845) 306-0707

KEEP GROWING IN BROTHERLY LOVE

"Go on walking in love, just as the Christ also loved you."—EPH. 5:2.

PREACHING the good news of God's Kingdom from house to house is a trademark of Jehovah's Witnesses. Still, Christ Jesus chose a different facet of Christianity to identify his genuine disciples. He said: "I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves."—John 13:34, 35.

² The love of the true Christian brotherhood has no equal in human society. Just as a magnet draws iron, so love draws Jehovah's servants together in unity and attracts sincere ones to true worship. For example, take Marcelino, a man in Cameroon who lost his eyesight at work. After his accident, the rumor spread that he had become blind because he was a witch. Instead of giving him comfort, his pastor and other members of his church expelled him from the congregation. When one of Jehovah's Witnesses invited him to a meeting, Marcelino hesitated. He did not want to face more rejection.

³ Marcelino was surprised by what happened at the Kingdom Hall. He was warmly welcomed, and he gained comfort from the Bible teachings he heard. He began attending all congregation meetings, progressed in his Bible study, and was baptized in 2006. Now he is sharing the truth with his family

1. What important characteristic of his followers did Jesus point to?

2, 3. What effect does our brotherly love have on those who attend our Christian meetings?

and neighbors and has started several Bible studies. Marcelino wants the individuals studying the Bible with him to feel the same love he has experienced among God's people.

⁴ Appealing as it is, our brotherly love cannot be taken for granted. Think of a campfire burning at night, drawing people to its warm, flickering flames. Unless those enjoying the fire supply it with fuel, it will go out. Likewise, the wonderful bond of love in the congregation will weaken unless we as individual Christians work to strengthen it. How can we do so? The apostle Paul answers: "Go on walking in love, just as the Christ also loved you and delivered himself up for you as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling odor." (Eph. 5:2) The question that we want to consider is, In what ways can I go on walking in love?

You, Too, Widen Out*

⁵ To the Christians in ancient Corinth, the apostle Paul wrote: "Our mouth has been opened to you, Corinthians, our heart has widened out. You are not cramped for room within us, but you are cramped for room in your own tender affections. So, as a recompense in return—I speak as to children—you, too, widen out." (2 Cor. 6:11-13) Why did Paul urge the Corinthians to widen out in their love?

4. Why should we take to heart Paul's admonition to "go on walking in love"?

5, 6. Why did Paul urge the Corinthian Christians to "widen out"?

⁶ Consider how the congregation in ancient Corinth got its start. Paul came to Corinth in the fall of 50 C.E. Although his preaching work there began with difficulty, the apostle did not give up. In a short time, many in that city put faith in the good news. For "a year and six months," Paul spent himself teaching and strengthening the new congregation. Clearly, he had deep love for the Corinthian Christians. (Acts 18:5, 6, 9-11) They had every reason to love and respect him in return. However, some in the congregation drew away from him. Perhaps a few did not like his frank counsel. (1 Cor. 5: 1-5; 6:1-10) Others may have listened to the slander of the "superfine apostles." (2 Cor. 11:5, 6) Paul wanted the genuine love of all his brothers and sisters. So he entreated them to "widen out" by drawing close to him and other fellow believers.

⁷ What about us? How can we "widen out" in displaying brotherly love? Individuals in the same age bracket or of the same ethnic background may naturally be attracted to one another. And those with similar preferences in recreation often spend much time together. But if the interests that we share with some Christians separate us from others, we need to "widen out." It would be wise to ask ourselves: 'Do I seldom share in the ministry or social activities with brothers

7. How can we "widen out" in displaying brotherly love?

and sisters outside my intimate group? At the Kingdom Hall, do I limit my contact with those newly associated because I believe that they have to earn my friendship over time? Do I greet both older and younger ones in the congregation?"

⁸ In the matter of greeting one another, Paul's words to the Romans can help us develop the proper view of our fellow worshippers. (*Read Romans 15:7*) The Greek word there rendered "welcome" means "to receive kindly or hospitably, admit to one's society and friendship." When a hospitable host in Bible times received friends into his home, he let them know how happy he was to see them. Christ has figuratively welcomed us in that way, and we are exhorted to imitate him in welcoming fellow worshippers.

⁹ As we greet our brothers at the Kingdom Hall and other places, we can pay attention to those whom we have not seen or with whom we have not spoken recently. Why not spend a few minutes conversing with them? At the next meeting, we can do the same with others. In a short while, we will have had delightful conversations with just about all our brothers and sisters. There is no need to worry if we do not get to speak with everyone on the same day. No one should

8, 9. How can Paul's counsel recorded at Romans 15:7 help us to greet one another in a way that enhances our brotherly love?



Warmly welcome fellow believers

take offense if we are not able to greet them at every meeting.

¹⁰ Greeting others is the first step in welcoming them. It is a step that can lead to enjoyable discussions and lasting friendships. For example, when those attending conventions and assemblies introduce themselves to others and begin talking, they look forward to seeing one another again. Kingdom Hall construction volunteers as well as those sharing in relief work often become good friends because they get to know one another's fine qualities through the experiences they share. The opportunities for forming lasting friendships abound in Jehovah's organization. If we "widen out," our circle of friends will grow, intensifying the love that unites us in true worship.

Make Time for Others

¹¹ All Christians can strive to be approachable, as Jesus was. Consider how Jesus responded when his disciples tried to prevent parents from bringing their children to him. "Let the young children come to me," he said. "Do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to suchlike ones." Then "he took the children into his arms and began blessing them, laying his hands upon them." (Mark 10:13-16) Imagine how thrilled those young ones must have been to be shown such loving attention by the Great Teacher!

¹² Each Christian should ask himself, 'Do I make myself available to others or do I often appear to be too busy?' Habits that are not wrong in themselves can sometimes raise

10. What priceless opportunity is available to all in the congregation, and how can we take full advantage of it?

11. As shown at Mark 10:13-16, what example did Jesus set?

12. What can hinder us from conversing with others?

barricades to conversation. If we frequently use a cellular telephone or use earphones to listen to recordings in the presence of others, for example, we may send the message that we prefer not to have their company. If others often see us engrossed in looking at a handheld computer, they might conclude that we do not care to speak to them. Of course, there is "a time to keep quiet." But when we are around people, it is often the "time to speak." (Eccl. 3:7) Some might say, "I prefer to keep to myself" or "I don't feel like talking in the morning." Nonetheless, engaging in friendly conversation even when we are not inclined to do so is evidence of love that "does not look for its own interests."—1 Cor. 13:5.

¹³ Paul encouraged young Timothy to have respect for all members of the congregation. (*Read 1 Timothy 5:1, 2.*) We too should treat older Christians as if they were our mothers and fathers and the younger ones as our siblings, that is, children of our own parents. When we have that attitude, none of our dear brothers and sisters will feel like strangers in our presence.

¹⁴ As we engage others in upbuilding conversation, we contribute to their spirituality and emotional well-being. A brother working at a branch office fondly remembers several older Bethelites who regularly took time to speak with him in his early days at Bethel. Their encouraging words made him feel that he really was part of the Bethel family. Now he tries to imitate them by conversing with his fellow Bethelites.

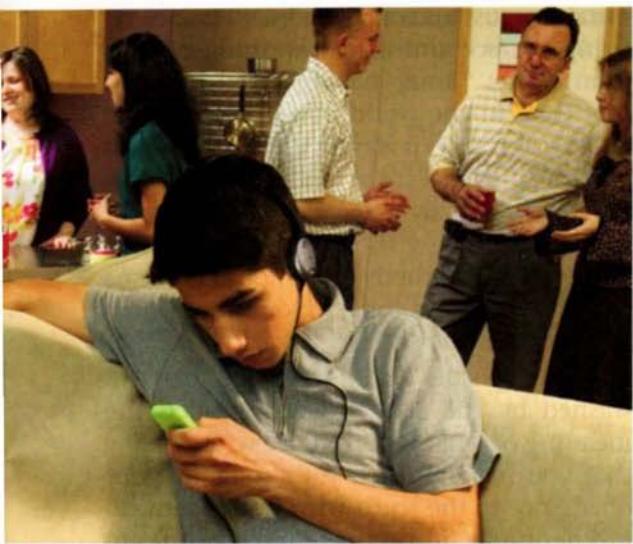
Humility Helps Us to Make Peace

¹⁵ Euodia and Syntyche, two Christian sis-

13. What view of Christian brothers and sisters did Paul encourage Timothy to have?

14. What are some benefits of having upbuilding conversations with others?

15. What shows that we are not immune to disagreements?



Do not miss opportunities to make time for others

ters in ancient Philippi, apparently had some difficulty in resolving a problem that arose between them. (Phil. 4:2, 3) A heated dispute between Paul and Barnabas became public knowledge and resulted in their going separate ways for a while. (Acts 15:37-39) These accounts show that true worshippers are not immune to disagreements. Jehovah provides us with help to resolve conflicts and restore friendships. But he requires something of us.

¹⁶ Imagine that you and a friend are going to take a trip by automobile. Before you can begin your journey, you must put a key into the ignition and start the car's engine. The process of resolving personal differences is also started with a key. The key is humility. (*Read James 4:10.*) As shown by the following Scriptural example, that key allows those at odds with each other to begin applying Bible principles.

^{16, 17. (a)} How important is humility in resolving personal conflicts? (b) How does the account of Jacob's approach to Esau illustrate the value of humility?

¹⁷ Twenty years had passed since Esau became bitter over losing his birthright to his twin brother, Jacob, and wanted to kill him. The twins were about to meet again after all that time, "and Jacob became very much afraid and grew anxious." He felt that there was a strong possibility that Esau would assault him. But at that meeting, Jacob did something Esau did not expect. He "proceeded to bow down to the earth" as he approached his brother. What happened next? "Esau went running to meet him, and he began to embrace him and fall upon his neck and kiss him, and they burst into tears." The danger of a fight was averted. Jacob's humility helped to overcome whatever hatred Esau might have harbored.—Gen. 27:41; 32:3-8; 33:3, 4.

¹⁸ The Bible contains excellent counsel on resolving conflicts. (Matt. 5:23, 24; 18:15-17; Eph. 4:26, 27)* Unless we humbly apply that counsel, however, making peace will be difficult. Waiting for the other person to show humility is not the solution when we too are holding the key in our hand.

* See the book *Organized to Do Jehovah's Will*, pages 144-150.

^{18, 19. (a)} When personal conflicts arise, why is it essential that we take the initiative to apply Scriptural counsel? (b) Why should we not give up if the other person does not at first respond in a positive way?

Do You Remember?

- In what ways can we "widen out" in our love for one another?
- What will help us to make time for others?
- What role does humility play in making peace?
- What should move us to care for fellow believers?

¹⁹ If our initial attempts to make peace seem unfruitful for some reason, we should not give up hope. The other person may need time to sort out his feelings. Joseph's brothers dealt treacherously with Joseph. It was a long time before they faced him as prime minister of Egypt. Finally, however, they had a change of heart and begged for forgiveness. Joseph pardoned them, and Jacob's sons became a nation that had the privilege of bearing the name of Jehovah. (Gen. 50:15-21) By maintaining peace with our brothers and sisters, we contribute to the unity and joy of the congregation.—*Read Colossians 3:12-14.*

Let Us Love "in Deed and Truth"

²⁰ Shortly before his death, Jesus told his apostles: "I set the pattern for you, that, just as I did to you, you should do also." (John 13:15) He had just finished washing the feet of the 12. What Jesus did was neither a mere

20, 21. What lesson can we learn from Jesus' washing the feet of his apostles?

ritual nor just an act of kindness. Before relating the account of the washing of feet, John wrote: "Jesus, having loved his own that were in the world, loved them to the end." (John 13:1) It was his love for the disciples that moved Jesus to render a service usually performed by a slave. Now they must humbly do loving things for one another. Yes, genuine brotherly love should move us to display care and concern for all our Christian brothers and sisters.

²¹ The apostle Peter, who had his feet washed by the Son of God, grasped the meaning of what Jesus did. He wrote: "Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth with unhypocritical brotherly affection as the result, love one another intensely from the heart." (1 Pet. 1:22) The apostle John, whose feet were also washed by the Lord, wrote: "Little children, let us love, neither in word nor with the tongue, but in deed and truth." (1 John 3:18) May our hearts move us to confirm our brotherly love by action.

DISPLAYING GOOD MANNERS AS MINISTERS OF GOD

"Become imitators of God."—EPH. 5:1.

CONCERNING respectful conduct, author Sue Fox writes: "There's no such thing as a vacation from good manners. Politeness works everywhere, all the time." When people make a habit of being courteous, problems with others are minimized and often disappear. But the opposite is also true. Treat-

1, 2. (a) Why are good manners important? (b) What will be discussed in this article?

ing others in an ill-mannered fashion leads to conflict, resentment, and sadness.

² Good manners generally flourish in the true Christian congregation. Still, we must guard against adopting the bad manners that are common in the world today. Let us see how applying Bible principles in the matter of courtesy can protect us in this regard and draw people to true worship. To understand

what displaying good manners entails, consider the examples of Jehovah God and his Son.

Jehovah and His Son —Examples of Good Manners

³ Jehovah God sets the perfect example of courtesy. Despite his high position as Sovereign of the universe, he treats humans with great kindness and respect. In addressing both Abraham and Moses, Jehovah used a Hebrew term often translated “please.” (Gen. 13:14; Ex. 4:6) When his servants commit errors, Jehovah is “merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and trueness.” (Ps. 86:15) He is far different from some humans who explode with fury when others do not meet their expectations.

⁴ God’s good manners are also evident in the way he listens to humans. When Abraham raised questions regarding the people of Sodom, Jehovah patiently answered each one. (Gen. 18:23-32) He did not view Abraham’s concern as a drain on His time. Jehovah listens to the prayers of his servants and to the cries of repentant sinners. (*Read Psalm 51:11, 17.*) Should we not imitate Jehovah by listening when others speak to us?

⁵ Among the many things that Jesus Christ learned from his Father was courtesy. Although his ministry at times placed great demands on his time and energy, Jesus was always patient and kind. Lepers, blind people reduced to begging, and others in need found Jesus ready and willing to help them. He did not ignore them, although they came to him without an appointment. He often stopped what he was doing in order to

3. What example of courtesy has Jehovah God set?
4. How can we imitate Jehovah when others speak to us?
5. How can imitating Jesus’ courtesy improve our relationships with others?

help a distraught individual. Jesus was extraordinarily considerate toward those who put their faith in him. (Mark 5:30-34; Luke 18:35-41) As Christians, we follow Jesus’ example by being kind and helpful. Such conduct does not go unnoticed by our relatives, neighbors, and others. Moreover, such conduct glorifies Jehovah and brings us happiness.

⁶ Jesus also showed people respect by using their names. Did the Jewish religious leaders dignify others in that way? No. They viewed those who did not know the Law as “accursed people” and treated them as such. (John 7:49) It was not so with the Son of God. Martha, Mary, Zacchaeus, and many others heard him call them by their name. (Luke 10:41, 42; 19:5) While cultural norms and circumstances may dictate how we address people today, Jehovah’s servants cultivate warmth toward others.* They do not allow class distinctions to curtail the respect their fellow believers and others deserve.
—*Read James 2:1-4.*

⁷ The gracious way that God and his Son treat people of all nations and ethnic groups dignifies such individuals and attracts those rightly disposed to the truth. Of course, what constitutes good manners varies from place to place. Hence, we do not follow rigid protocol in regard to manners. Rather, we allow Bible principles to give us flexibility in dignifying fellow humans everywhere. Let us examine how treating people with courtesy can lead to our being more productive in the Christian ministry.

* In some cultures, it is considered poor manners to address a person older than oneself by his first name unless invited to do so by the older one. Christians do well to respect such customs.

6. What example of warmth and friendliness did Jesus set?
7. How do Bible principles help us in showing courtesy to fellow humans everywhere?

Greeting People and Talking to Them

⁸ In the fast-paced life that is common in many places today, two people often pass each other without saying "hello" or "how are you?" Of course, no one is expected to speak to everyone passing by on a crowded sidewalk. In many other situations, however, it is appropriate and desirable to greet others. Is it your custom to greet people? Or do you often walk by without a smile or a pleasant word? With no bad intention, a person could develop a habit that is in reality ill-mannered.

⁹ Jesus gave us a reminder when he said: "If you greet your brothers only, what extraordinary thing are you doing? Are not also the people of the nations doing the same thing?" (Matt. 5:47) In this regard, consultant Donald Weiss wrote: "People resent it when others look through or past them. There's really no excuse you can make that will appease those who have been ignored.

8, 9. (a) What habit might be interpreted as bad manners? (b) Why should we allow Jesus' words recorded at Matthew 5:47 to affect the way we treat people?

The remedy is simple: Greet people. Talk to them." If we do not let aloofness or coldness on our part chill our contact with others, we will have good results.

¹⁰ Consider the case of a Christian couple named Tom and Carol, who live in a large North American city. They have made pleasant conversation with their neighbors a part of their ministry. How do they do it? Referring to James 3:18, Tom says: "We try to be friendly and peaceable with people. We approach those we see outside their homes and those who work in the area. We smile and greet them. We talk about what interests them—their children, their dogs, their homes, their jobs. In time, they view us as their friends." Carol adds: "On a later visit, we give them our names and ask for theirs. We let them know what we are doing in the neighborhood but keep the conversations brief. Eventually, we can give them a witness." Tom and Carol have won the confi-

10. How can good manners help us to have a productive ministry? (See the box "Start With a Warm Smile.")

Being friendly to people can lead to giving a good witness



dence of many of their neighbors. A good number have accepted Bible-based publications, and a few have shown greater interest in learning the truth.

Showing Courtesy in Difficult Circumstances

¹¹ At times, we face impolite treatment as we preach the good news. We expect this, for Christ Jesus forewarned his disciples: "If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also." (John 15:20) But responding in kind to disparaging comments does not produce good results. How should we react? The apostle Peter wrote: "Sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you, but doing so together with a mild temper and deep respect." (1 Pet. 3:15) Our displaying courtesy—responding mildly and respectfully—may soften the attitude of those who insult us.—Titus 2:7, 8.

11, 12. Why should we expect mistreatment while preaching the good news, and how should we react to it?

¹² Can we prepare to face negative comments in a way that meets with God's approval? Yes. Paul recommended: "Let your utterance be *always* with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one." (Col. 4:6) If we make it a habit to be courteous to family members, fellow students, coworkers, members of the congregation, and people in the neighborhood, we are better prepared to face mockery and insults in a way worthy of a Christian.—*Read Romans 12:17-21.*

¹³ Displaying good manners in difficult situations brings good results. In Japan, for example, a certain Witness faced ridicule from both a householder and his guest. With a courteous attitude, the brother left the door. As he continued preaching in the territory, he noticed that the guest was watching him from a short distance away. When the brother approached him, the man said: "I'm sorry about what happened. Even though we said unkind things to you, I noticed that you

13. Give an example of how showing courtesy may soften the attitude of opposers.

Start With a Warm Smile

Many people hesitate to start a conversation with someone they do not know. Because of love for God and for their neighbor, however, Jehovah's Witnesses make an earnest effort to learn how to converse in order to share Bible truths with others. What can help you to improve in this area?

A valuable principle is stated at Philippians 2:4, which reads: "[Keep] an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others." Think about these words in this way: If you have never met a certain person before, he views you as a stranger. How can you

put him at ease? A warm smile and a friendly greeting may help. Yet, there is more to consider.

By attempting to start a conversation with someone, you may have interrupted his thoughts. If you try to get him to discuss what is on your mind without concern for what is on his, he may not respond favorably. Therefore, if you can possibly discern what the person may have been thinking about, why not use that to start a conversation with him? That is what Jesus did when he met a woman at a well in Samaria. (John 4:7-26) Her mind was on getting water. Jesus initiated his conversation with her on that basis, and he soon turned it into a lively spiritual discussion.



Good manners are always appropriate

kept smiling. What do I have to do to be like that?" Because that man had lost his job and his mother had just died, he lacked all hope of being happy. The Witness offered him a Bible study, which the man accepted. Soon he was studying twice a week.

The Best Way to Develop Polite Behavior

¹⁴ Godly parents in Bible times made sure that their children learned basic points of courtesy in the home. Consider the polite way in which Abraham and his son Isaac addressed each other at Genesis 22:7. The good training from his parents was evident also in the case of Joseph. When imprisoned, he was courteous even to his fellow prisoners. (Gen. 40:8, 14) His words to Pharaoh show that he had learned the proper way to address a person of high office.—Gen. 41:16, 33, 34.

¹⁵ The Ten Commandments given to the sons of Israel included this command: "Honor your father and your mother in order that your days may prove long upon

14, 15. How did servants of Jehovah in Bible times train their children?

the ground that Jehovah your God is giving you." (Ex. 20:12) One way for children to honor their parents was by having good manners at home. Jephthah's daughter showed outstanding respect for her father by complying with his vow in a very trialsome situation.—Judg. 11:35-40.

¹⁶ The value of training our children to be well-mannered cannot be overestimated. To get along well as adults, young ones need to learn the proper way to greet visitors, to answer the telephone, and to eat a meal with others. They should be helped to understand why they ought to hold doors for people, show kindness to the elderly and sick, and offer to help those carrying heavy packages. They need to understand the importance of sincerely saying "please," "thank you," "you are welcome," "may I help you?," and "I am sorry."

¹⁷ Training children to be courteous need not be hard. The best way is by setting a good example. Twenty-five-year-old Kurt says this about how he and his three brothers learned to be polite: "We watched and listened as Mom and Dad spoke kindly to each other and treated other people with patience and

16-18. (a) What can be done to teach children good manners? (b) What are some benefits of teaching children good manners?

Do You Recall?

- What do we learn from Jehovah and his Son about displaying good manners?
- Why does greeting people warmly reflect well on us as Christians?
- How does being courteous contribute to a productive ministry?
- What role do parents play in teaching their children good manners?

consideration. At the Kingdom Hall, Dad would take me with him before and after the meetings to speak to the older brothers and sisters. I heard his greetings and saw the respect he had for them." Kurt goes on to say: "In time, his manners became mine. Treating people with courtesy becomes automatic. It is not the way you *have* to act, but the way you *want* to act."

¹⁸ What is likely to happen if parents teach their children good manners? The children will be able to make friends and will maintain peace with others. They will be well-equipped to work with employers and coworkers. Moreover, children who are courteous, mannerly, and upright will bring their parents joy and satisfaction.—*Read Proverbs 23:24, 25.*

Good Manners Make a Difference

¹⁹ "Become imitators of God, as beloved children," wrote Paul. (Eph. 5:1) Imitating Jehovah God and his Son involves applying Bible principles, such as those considered in this article. By doing so, we will avoid the hypocrisy of showing courtesy just to curry favor with a superior or to get a material advantage.—Jude 16.

²⁰ In the last days of his evil rule, Satan is bent on wiping out the standards of respectful conduct that Jehovah has established. But the Devil will fail to eradicate the good manners of true Christians. May each of us be determined to follow the examples of our gracious God and his Son. Then our speech and conduct will always be in contrast with the actions of those who choose to be ill-mannered. We will bring praise to the name of our well-mannered God, Jehovah, and will attract sincere people to his true worship.

19, 20. Why should we be determined to imitate our gracious God and his Son?



A Little Girl With a Big Heart

RECENTLY, on her own initiative, a nine-year-old girl in Brazil separated the money she had saved into two parts—18 dollars and 25 dollars. She put the smaller amount into the contribution box at the local Kingdom Hall to help cover congregation expenses. Then she forwarded the larger portion to the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses, along with a short letter. Her letter stated: "I want to make this donation to the worldwide work. My desire is to help many brothers and sisters around the world to preach the good news. I am giving it with great affection and love for Jehovah."

The little girl's parents have taught her the importance of having a personal share in the Kingdom-preaching work. They have also impressed upon her the need to 'honor Jehovah with her valuable things.' (Prov. 3:9) Like that little girl, may all of us have a zealous share in promoting Kingdom interests, both locally and globally!



Cherish Your Deaf Brothers and Sisters!

GOD'S people today are a large family of spiritual brothers and sisters, whose heritage can be traced back to men and women of ancient times. These include Samuel, David, Samson, Rahab, Moses, Abraham, Sarah, Noah, and Abel. Among Jehovah's loyal servants are many deaf individuals. For example, the first two people to become Jehovah's Witnesses in Mongolia were a deaf couple. And as a result of the integrity of our deaf fellow believers in Russia, we obtained a legal victory in the European Court of Human Rights.

In modern times, "the faithful and discreet slave" has provided sign-language publications and has organized congregations as well as assemblies and conventions in sign language. (Matt. 24:45) These have benefited the deaf greatly.* But have you ever wondered what it was like for the deaf to learn about the true God and make progress in the truth without these provisions? Have you thought about what you might do to help the deaf who live in your community?

Before Modern-Day Provisions

What if you were to ask some older deaf ones about their experience in coming to know God? They may tell you how they felt when they first learned that God has a name —how that single truth changed their life and sustained them for years before sign-language video programs or DVDs became available to help them learn deeper Scriptur-

al truths. They may explain what it was like when Christian meetings were not conducted or interpreted into sign language. Instead, someone would sit next to them and write notes on a sheet of paper to help them understand what was being said. One deaf brother learned Bible truths in this way for seven years before an interpreter finally came along.

Older deaf Witnesses remember what it was like to engage in the "hearing" field ministry. In one hand, they held up an index card with a simple door-to-door presentation written on it. They would hold the latest *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines in the other hand. It was a struggle to conduct a Bible study with another deaf person using only printed publications that neither of them understood very well. Older deaf publishers likely recall the frustration they experienced when they were not understood and therefore could not talk further about spiritual truths. They also know how it feels to have a profound love for Jehovah yet be unable to act upon it confidently. Why? Because they were not sure that their understanding of a particular matter was correct.

Despite all these obstacles, our deaf brothers and sisters have been holding fast their integrity. (Job 2:3) They have longingly waited for Jehovah. (Ps. 37:7) And he is now blessing them with more than many of them had ever anticipated.

Consider the efforts made by a certain deaf brother who is a husband and a father. Before sign-language videos became available, he faithfully took the lead in conduct-

* See the article "Jehovah Has Made His Face Shine Toward Them," in the August 15, 2009, issue of *The Watchtower*.

ing the family study. His son recalls: "The family study was always difficult for my father, since all he had to teach us from were the printed publications. Often, he did not fully understand the written text. We youngsters didn't help much either. We would be quick to let him know when he didn't explain things correctly. Despite all of this, he *always* held the family study. He felt that our learning something about Jehovah was more important than his occasional embarrassment because of his limitations in understanding English."

There is also the example of Richard, a brother in his 70's who is both deaf and blind and who lives in Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A. Richard is well-known for his regularity at Christian meetings. To attend, he takes the subway by himself, counting the stops so that he knows when to get off. One winter, there was such a severe snow-storm that the meeting was canceled. All in the congregation were notified, but somehow Richard was not informed. When the brothers realized what had happened and searched for him, they found Richard standing outside the Kingdom Hall, waiting patiently for the doors to open. When asked why he went out in the storm, he replied, "I love Jehovah."

What Can You Do?

Do deaf people live in your area? Could you learn some sign language in order to communicate with them? Deaf people are usually very gracious and patient when teaching others their language. You may meet a deaf person informally or in the ministry. What can you do? Try to communicate. Use gestures, notes, drawings, pictures, or a combination of these. Even if the individual indicates that he is not interested in the truth, tell a Witness who is deaf or knows sign language about your visit. The message

may be more appealing to a deaf person when it is presented in sign language.

Perhaps you are learning sign language and attend a sign-language congregation. How can you become more skilled in signing and understanding the language? Although there may be other hearing publishers in your congregation, why not "turn off" your voice? This will help you to *think* in sign language, that is, visually. At times, you may be tempted to take the easy way out by speaking. When learning any language, however, you must endure the growing pains to become fluent.

Putting forth diligent effort to use sign language shows love and respect for our deaf brothers and sisters. Imagine the feelings of frustration the deaf experience day in and day out because of not being able to understand people at work or at school. "Every day, people all around me speak," said one deaf brother. "Often feelings of loneliness

The Kingdom message may be more appealing to a deaf person when it is presented in sign language





Our meetings should be an oasis where our deaf brothers and sisters receive spiritual encouragement



and being left out build up inside, and I become exasperated, even angry. Words cannot fully describe how I feel at times." Our meetings should be an oasis where our deaf brothers and sisters receive spiritual food and enjoy warm communication and fellowship.—John 13:34, 35.

Not to be overlooked are the many smaller groups of deaf individuals that meet together with hearing congregations. The meetings are interpreted for them. To understand fully what is presented, deaf members of the congregation sit at the front of the Kingdom Hall. This enables them to see both the interpreter and the speaker in the same line of sight without hindrance. Experience has shown that the rest of the congregation gets used to this rather quickly, and it is not a distraction. These arrangements also apply to assemblies and conventions that offer sign-language interpreting. Hardworking members of the congregation deserve warm commendation for interpreting as a deaf person might express the information—meaningfully and naturally.

Perhaps you belong to a congregation that sponsors a sign-language group or that has a smaller number of deaf people for whom the meetings are interpreted. What can you do to show these deaf brothers personal attention? Invite them to your home. If possible, learn a few signs. Do not be intimidated by the barrier of communication. You will find a way to communicate, and showing such love will result in enjoyable memories. (1 John 4:8) Our deaf fellow Witnesses have much to offer. They are great conversationalists, are keenly insightful, and have a wonderful sense of humor. Says one brother whose parents are both deaf: "All my life I have been around deaf people, and they have given me far more than I could ever repay. We can learn a lot from our deaf brothers and sisters."

Jehovah loves his faithful worshippers, including those who are deaf. Their example of faith and endurance certainly adds to the richness of Jehovah's organization. May we therefore cherish our deaf brothers and sisters!