

OUR KINGDOM MINISTRY

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For United States of America

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"Prove Yourselves Ready"

¹ In his great prophecy regarding the conclusion of this system of things, Jesus cautioned against becoming absorbed by the mundane concerns of life. (Matt. 24:36-39; Luke 21:34, 35) Since the outbreak of the great tribulation can occur at any time, it is imperative that we heed Jesus' admonition: "Prove yourselves ready, because at an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming." (Matt. 24:44) What can assist us in this regard?

² **Combating Anxieties and Distractions:** One of the spiritual pitfalls we must guard against is "anxieties over livelihood." (Luke 21:34, ftn.) In some lands, poverty, unemployment, and the high cost of living make

it difficult to obtain the necessities of life. In other lands, acquiring material possessions is commonplace. If concern over material things begins to dominate our thinking, we are in danger of losing our focus on Kingdom realities. (Matt. 6:19-24, 31-33) Christian meetings help us to maintain that focus. Do you make it your aim to attend every meeting?—Heb. 10:24, 25.

³ The world today is full of distractions that can easily rob us of precious time. Computer use can become a snare if one spends inordinate amounts of time browsing the Internet, reading and sending E-mail, or playing computer games. Countless hours can be lost to television, mov-

ies, hobbies, secular reading, and sports, leaving us with little time or energy for spiritual pursuits. While recreation and relaxation can provide refreshment temporarily, personal and family Bible study yield everlasting benefits. (1 Tim. 4:7, 8) Do you buy out time to meditate on God's Word each day?—Eph. 5:15-17.

⁴ How grateful we can be that Jehovah's organization has arranged a program of spiritual instruction to help us "succeed in escaping all [the] things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man"! (Luke 21:36) May we take full advantage of these provisions and 'prove ourselves ready' so that our faith may be "a cause for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."—1 Pet. 1:7.

Commendation Refreshes

¹ "Haven't I been a good girl today?" the little girl sobbed at bedtime. That question took her mother aback. Despite having noticed how hard her little girl was trying to behave that day, she had neglected to express even one word of appreciation. That little girl's tears should serve as a reminder that all of us—young and old—need commendation. Do we refresh those around us by expressing appreciation for the good that they do?—Prov. 25:11.

² Fellow Christians give us many good reasons to commend them. Elders, ministerial servants, and pioneers work hard to fulfill their responsibilities. (1 Tim. 4:10; 5:17) God-fearing parents do their utmost

to raise their children in Jehovah's ways. (Eph. 6:4) Christian youths put up a hard fight to resist "the spirit of the world." (1 Cor. 2:12; Eph. 2:1-3) Others faithfully serve Jehovah despite advancing age, health problems, or other trials. (2 Cor. 12:7) All such ones deserve commendation. Do we acknowledge their praiseworthy efforts?

³ **Personal and Specific:** We all truly appreciate hearing commendation from the platform. However, commendation is even more refreshing when it is directed to us personally. For example, in chapter 16 of his letter to the Romans, Paul made specific expressions of appreciation regarding Phoebe, Prisca and Aquila, Try-

phaena and Tryphosa, and Persis, among others. (Rom. 16:1-4, 12) How refreshing his words must have been to those faithful ones! Such praise reassures our brothers and sisters that they are needed and serves to draw us closer together. Have you given specific personal commendation recently?—Eph. 4:29.

⁴ **From the Heart:** To be truly refreshing, commendation must be sincere. People can tell whether we are speaking from the heart or we are merely 'flattering with the tongue.' (Prov. 28:23) As we train ourselves to notice the good in others, our heart will be moved to commend. May we be generous in giving genuine commendation, knowing that "a word at its right time is O how good!" —Prov. 15:23.

SERVICE MEETING SCHEDULE

Week Starting November 10

Song 212

10 min: Local announcements and selected Announcements from *Our Kingdom Ministry*. Have two realistic demonstrations of how to use the suggestions on page 4 to present the November 15 *Watchtower* and the November 22 *Awake!* in your territory. In each case, both magazines should be offered as a set, even though only one is featured. Have one of the demonstrations include an explanation of how our worldwide work is financed.—See *The Watchtower*, p. 2, or *Awake!* p. 5.

15 min: “Prove Yourselves Ready.”* Invite the audience to comment on what helps them to keep the anxieties and distractions of the present system of things from consuming time that would be better spent in spiritual pursuits.

20 min: How Do You Choose Your Associates? Audience discussion based on *Worship God* book, pages 47-9. Using the questions and cited scriptures in paragraph 13, invite audience to comment on Bible principles that should guide us in choosing our associates.

Song 127 and concluding prayer.

Week Starting November 17

Song 96

12 min: Local announcements. Outline special field service arrangements for November 27. Review “Use the *Worship God* Book to Conduct Bible Studies.” Interview one or two publishers who have had interesting field service experiences using the current literature offer.

15 min: Cultivate a Giving Spirit. A talk by an elder, based on the November 1, 2003, *Watchtower*, pages 26-30.

18 min: “Commendation Refreshes.”* Include comments on the *Family Happiness* book, pages 49-50, paragraph 21. Invite brief comments by individuals who were encouraged by words of commendation from others.

Song 58 and concluding prayer.

Week Starting November 24

Song 213

12 min: Local announcements. Accounts report. Have two separate demonstrations of how to use the suggestions on page 4 to present the December 1 *Watchtower* and the December 8 *Awake!* A different scripture from the one suggested on page 4 may be used. In each case, both magazines should be offered as a set, even though only one is featured. In one of the presentations, demonstrate offering the magazines informally on public transportation or in some other appropriate local setting.

10 min: Question Box. Talk by an elder.

23 min: “Cultivating Intimacy With Jehovah.”* Use the questions that are provided. Draw comments from the audience on how the scriptures apply. Arrange in advance for one or two to offer comments on what has helped them to improve the quality of their personal Bible study.

Song 202 and concluding prayer.

Week Starting December 1

Song 138

10 min: Local announcements. Remind publishers to turn in field service reports for November. Mention literature offer for December. Briefly review one or two suggested presentations. Explain how publishers can use the *Watch Tower Publications Index* to find additional presentations.—See the September 2001 *Our Kingdom Ministry*, p. 2.

15 min: Local needs.

20 min: Adequately Qualified to Teach Others. Audience discussion based on the June 1, 2000, *Watchtower*, pages 16-17, paragraphs 9-13. Being able to teach effectively is a primary goal in our ministry. Our success in helping sheeplike ones depends on our ability to convey the Kingdom message in a way that informs and motivates them. Discuss the following questions: (1) What is the difference between preaching and teaching? (it-2 p. 672 par. 2) (2) Why are some hesitant about

trying to conduct a Bible study? (3) How can we improve our teaching ability? (4) How can we make sure our student gets the sense of what he is learning? (5) What goal should we try to help the student to achieve?

Song 70 and concluding prayer.

* Limit introductory comments to less than a minute, and follow with a question-and-answer discussion.

Use the *Worship God* Book to Conduct Bible Studies

The book *Worship the Only True God* is designed to help newer ones advance in the truth and deepen their appreciation for Jehovah and his organization. It can be used with Bible students as the second study book. The June 2000 *Our Kingdom Ministry*, page 4, explained: “If it is evident that a person is making progress, although slowly, and that he is developing appreciation for what he is learning, then continue the Bible study in a second book after the *Require* brochure and the *Knowledge* book are completed. . . . In all cases, the *Require* brochure and the *Knowledge* book would be studied first. The Bible study, return visits, and time spent to continue the study should be counted and reported, even if the student gets baptized before completing the second book.”

Who else can benefit from a Bible study in the *Worship God* book? That same article continues: “If you know of some who studied [the *Require* brochure and] the *Knowledge* book in the past but never progressed to dedication and baptism, you may want to take the initiative to see if they would like to resume their Bible study.” Let us make good use of the *Worship God* book to help others join us in serving the only true God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ Literature offer for **November:** *What Does God Require of Us?* or *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life.* If people already have these, *Worship the Only True God* or an older publication may be offered. ■ **December:** *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived.* As an alternative offer, you may use *My Book of Bible Stories*, *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?*, or *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth.* ■ **January:** Any book published prior to 1988 that the congregation may have in stock. If you do not have any of these in stock, please check if nearby congregations have a surplus of older publications on hand that you can use. Congregations that do not have older books may offer *Mankind's Search for God.* ■ **February:** *Draw Close to Jehovah.* If this publication is not available, you may use *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* or *Revelation—Its Grand Climax At Hand!* as an alternative offer.

■ The presiding overseer or someone designated by him should audit the congregation's accounts on December 1 or as soon as possible thereafter. When this has been done, make an announcement to the congrega-

tion after the next accounts report is read.

■ Congregations should begin requesting bound volumes of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* for 2003 with their next literature request. A listing of the languages in which these items are available will appear in the "Announcement to All Congregations," which is mailed to all congregations each month. Until the bound volumes are available and shipments are made, these will appear as "Pending" on congregation packing lists. Bound volumes are special-request items.

■ The secretary of each congregation holding title to property should review paragraphs 42-4 in the form entitled "Information Regarding Ownership of Kingdom Halls" (T-36). Even after real-estate tax exemption has been obtained, an annual filing is required in some states. Check carefully with your local tax assessor's office to confirm whether any action is required. All taxes and assessments are to be paid within the time provided. If any tax or assessment is questioned, promptly follow through on the matter so that either it is removed or a proper challenge is filed within the applicable time limit.

■ Donations made by check and put in the local Kingdom Hall con-

tribution boxes for the worldwide work and the Kingdom Hall Fund should be made payable to "Jehovah's Witnesses." Donations made by check at district conventions and those sent to the branch office should be made payable to "Watch Tower." The branch office financial address is Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, c/o Office of the Secretary and Treasurer, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483.

AUGUST SERVICE REPORT

Number of:	Av. Hrs.	Av. Mags.	Av. R.V.	Av. Bi.St.
Sp'l Pios.	171	102.7	87.7	46.2
Pios.	87,385	56.7	37.0	18.5
Aux. Pios.	21,817	49.9	35.7	12.7
Pubs.	920,279	9.4	8.5	3.6
TOTAL	1,029,652			Baptized: 1,932

August proved to be a month of remarkable activity. The total number of publishers recorded was 1,029,652. This is the second-highest number of Kingdom proclaimers ever recorded in the United States!

QUESTION BOX

■ Should a family Bible study be reported to the congregation?

If a Christian parent conducts a family Bible study and unbaptized children are involved, the parent may report a maximum of one hour a week, one return visit a week, and one home Bible study a month. This is the case even if the study lasts for more than one hour, is conducted more than once a week, or is conducted with the children individually. —See the *Our Ministry* book, p. 104.

If all in the household are baptized Witnesses, then neither the time nor the study it-

self is reported as field service (unless a child is still studying the second book after baptism). This is because the congregation's field service report reflects primarily what is being accomplished in preaching the good news and teaching Bible truth to those who are not dedicated and baptized servants of Jehovah. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) However, this in no way diminishes the importance of holding such a study regularly.

It is the responsibility of Christian parents to study with their children. Those who need assistance in establishing or improving their family study may ask the elders for help. If circumstances make it advisable for another

publisher to conduct a Bible study with an unbaptized son or daughter of a Christian family associated with the congregation, the presiding overseer or service overseer should be consulted. If such a study is approved, the one conducting it may report it just as he or she would any other Bible study.

Training children in Jehovah's ways involves far more time and effort than appears on a field service report. (Deut. 6:6-9; Prov. 22:6) Christian parents are to be commended for shouldering their weighty responsibility to bring up their children "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah."—Eph. 6:4.

Cultivating Intimacy With Jehovah

¹ "I have been existing in the truth for the past 20 or so years by just going to meetings and engaging in the field ministry," admitted one Christian sister. However, she continues: "I have come to the conclusion that although these things are important, they alone cannot sustain me when things start getting difficult. . . . I realize now that I have to readjust my thinking and begin a meaningful study program so that I can really get to know Jehovah and come to love him and appreciate what his Son has given us."

² Building a close personal relationship with Jehovah takes effort. It requires more than merely following a routine of Christian activity. If we fail to commune regularly with Jehovah, in time he can become to us like a once-close friend with whom we have lost touch. (Rev. 2:4) Let us examine how personal Bible study and prayer can help us to cultivate intimacy with Jehovah.

—Ps. 25:14.

³ Prayer and Meditation Vital: Personal study that nourishes the heart involves more than underlining key points in the study material and looking up the cited scriptures. It calls for us to reflect on what the information reveals about Jehovah's ways, standards, and personality. (Ex. 33:13) Getting to understand spiritual matters touches our emo-

tions and moves us to think about our own lives. (Ps. 119:35, 111) Personal study should be done with the objective of drawing close to Jehovah. (Jas. 4:8) Serious study requires time as well as the proper setting, and regular study takes discipline. (Dan. 6:10) Even if your life is very busy, are you setting aside time each day to meditate on Jehovah's marvelous qualities?—Ps. 119:147, 148; 143:5.

⁴ Heartfelt prayer is a vital part of meaningful personal study. For Bible truths to stir our hearts and move us to "render God sacred service with godly fear and awe," we need God's holy spirit. (Heb. 12:28) Therefore, we should open each study period by begging Jehovah for his spirit. (Matt. 5:3, ftn.) As we ponder the Scriptures and use the study aids provided by Jehovah's organization, we open our heart to Jehovah. (Ps. 62:8) Undertaking study in this manner is an act of worship by which we express our devotion to Jehovah and strengthen our attachment to him.—Jude 20, 21.

As with all relationships, our relationship with Jehovah must be nurtured continually in order for it to keep growing throughout our lives. May we, therefore, buy out time each day to draw close to God, knowing that he, in turn, will draw close to us.—Ps. 1:2, 3; Eph. 5:15, 16.

4. How does prayer in connection with personal study help us to cultivate intimacy with Jehovah?
5. Why is it important for us to meditate on God's Word each day?

1. What did one sister come to realize about her spiritual routine?
2. Why is it important to cultivate intimacy with Jehovah?
3. What approach to personal study will help us to draw close to God?

What to Say About the Magazines

THE WATCHTOWER Nov. 15 ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

"In the past, many believed that the earth would one day be a paradise. Today, some wonder if it will even survive. What is your view of earth's future? [Allow for response.] Notice what the Bible says about this. [Read Psalm 37:11.] This magazine discusses further what the Bible foretells for the earth."

Awake! Nov. 22

"Some people worry that the damage inflicted upon the environment is beyond repair. Do you think the situation is hopeless? [Allow for response.] The Creator did not intend for the earth to become an uninhabitable trash dump. [Read Isaiah 45:18.] This magazine explains how the earth will be saved."

THE WATCHTOWER Dec. 1 ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

"Some people today are losing faith in God. One reason for this is that they cannot find satisfying answers to troubling questions such as these. [Give an example from the box on page 6.] This issue of *The Watchtower* discusses one key to building genuine faith in God." Read Philippians 1:9.

Awake! Dec. 8

"Do you think mankind will ever enjoy conditions such as those described here? [Read Isaiah 14:7. Then allow for response.] This magazine contains practical information that can benefit us while we await the fulfillment of God's promises." Feature the article "How Can You Resist Wrong Desires?"