

“Take My Yoke Upon You”

¹ In a world filled with pressures and anxieties, we have experienced real relief by responding to Jesus' warm invitation to find the refreshment provided under his yoke. (Matt. 11:29, 30) Accepting the yoke of discipleship includes engaging in a work that is not only challenging but also refreshing. It involves preaching the good news of the Kingdom and helping others to find refreshment along with us under Jesus' kindly yoke.—Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20.

² **Refreshment From the Ministry:** Jesus did not ask his followers to add his load to what they were already carrying. He invited them to trade their heavy load for his light one. No longer are we weighed

down with the anxieties and hopelessness of this system of things; neither do we toil for uncertain riches. (Luke 21:34; 1 Tim. 6:17) Even though we are busy and must work to obtain daily necessities, we center our lives on the worship of God. (Matt. 6:33) We will always find the ministry to be refreshing, not burdensome, if we maintain the proper perspective on what is most important.—Phil. 1:10.

³ Naturally, we enjoy talking about whatever we hold dear to our heart. (Luke 6:45) All Christians care deeply about Jehovah and the Kingdom blessings he has promised. Thus, how refreshing it is to talk about “good news of good things” and leave behind our daily cares while

sharing in the ministry! (Rom. 10:15) Of course, the more we do something, the more proficient we become and the more joy we experience. Therefore, devoting more time to the ministry, if we are able, will bring additional refreshment. And how invigorating it is when individuals respond to our preaching! (Acts 15:3) Even when we encounter apathy or opposition, the ministry will bring spiritual refreshment if we keep in mind that our efforts please Jehovah and that any positive results will be due to his blessing.—Acts 5:41; 1 Cor. 3:9.

⁴ By accepting Jesus' invitation, we enjoy the privilege of serving alongside him as Witnesses of Jehovah. (Isa. 43:10; Rev. 1:5) Nothing could be more refreshing than that!

“Be Ready for Every Good Work”

¹ When Jesus began a new preaching campaign, he took time to prepare his disciples. (Matt. 10:5-14) Although all of us are busy, our taking even a few minutes to prepare before sharing in the door-to-door ministry will help us to reap fine results.—2 Cor. 9:6.

² **How to Prepare:** Good preparation starts with becoming acquainted with the literature we plan to offer. We should also think about the people in our territory. What issues concern them? What religious beliefs are we likely to encounter? We can consult the sample presentations in *Our Kingdom Ministry* and *Reasoning From the Scriptures* for ideas.

³ Carefully listening to the demonstrations given on the Service Meeting will also help us. As we gain experience using our presentation, we will need less time to prepare. However, each time before we go in the ministry, if we give some thought to what we will say and continue to refine our presentation, we will be more effective. We should also take a moment to check that our witnessing bag contains what we will need.

⁴ What will help us remember our presentation? Practicing out loud is one way to fix in our mind what we want to say. Some enjoy having practice sessions during their family study. Others find it helpful to write a short summary of their

presentation on an index card and glance at it just before approaching the door.

⁵ **Why Beneficial:** Being well-prepared increases our effectiveness and joy in the ministry. It helps us to relax and to be less nervous at the door. We are able to give greater attention to the householder instead of being preoccupied with what we are going to say. In addition, being familiar with the literature will help us to be more enthusiastic when offering it.

⁶ The Scriptures urge us to “be ready for every good work.” (Titus 3:1) What better work is there than that of preaching the good news? By being well-prepared, we demonstrate respect for the householder who agrees to listen, and for Jehovah, the God whom we represent.—Isa. 43:10.

SERVICE MEETING SCHEDULE

Week Starting May 12

Song 134

10 min: Local announcements. Selected Announcements from *Our Kingdom Ministry*. Using the suggestions on page 4 or other presentations appropriate for your territory, demonstrate how to offer the May 1 *Watchtower* and the May *Awake!*

15 min: We Can Cope With Any Trial! Talk based on the June 15, 2005, *Watchtower*, pages 30-1. Invite selected publishers to comment on how Jehovah helped them to cope with a particular trial.

20 min: Can You Auxiliary Pioneer During the Summer? Audience discussion. Review pages 112-13 in the *Organized* book, outlining the requirements. Invite those who have used vacation from work to auxiliary pioneer to comment on the blessings they enjoyed. Ask those who have auxiliary pioneered during school vacation to comment on how others encouraged and assisted them. How did auxiliary pioneering help them to progress spiritually? What joys did they experience? Encourage all those who qualify to consider pioneering during the summer months.

Song 187

Week Starting May 19

Song 47

10 min: Local announcements. Review Question Box.

15 min: Local needs.

20 min: "Riches Can Be Yours!"* Comment on the qualifications for regular pioneers, found on pages 113-14

of the *Organized* book. Those who wish to begin pioneering on September 1 should submit their application as soon as possible.

Song 206

Week Starting May 26

Song 103

10 min: Local announcements. Read accounts report and donation acknowledgments. Remind publishers to turn in field service reports for May. Using the suggestions on page 4 or other presentations appropriate for your territory, demonstrate how to offer the June 1 *Watchtower* and the June *Awake!*

15 min: "Take My Yoke Upon You."* As time permits, invite audience to comment on the cited scriptures.

20 min: Offer the *Bible Teach* book during June. Talk and demonstrations. Review some of the sample presentations from the January 2006 *Our Kingdom Ministry* insert. Include a two-part demonstration. Show how the book might be offered and then how to make a return visit with the goal of starting a Bible study.

Song 169

Week Starting June 2

Song 221

10 min: Local announcements.

20 min: Those of Faithful Acts Receive Many Blessings. (Prov. 28:20) Talk and audience discussion by the secretary. Outline how Jehovah has blessed the congregation's efforts to increase its activity during March, April, and May, and give commendation. An-

nounce the number that auxiliary pioneered, how many new Bible studies were started, and other good things accomplished in the ministry. Invite audience to relate experiences in connection with the Memorial and the campaign to distribute invitations. Outstanding field service experiences may be reenacted. Briefly interview two or three publishers regarding the blessings they enjoyed as auxiliary pioneers.

15 min: "Be Ready for Every Good Work."* Invite audience to relate how and when they prepare for the door-to-door ministry.

Song 44

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

JANUARY SERVICE REPORT

Number of:	Av. Hrs.	Av. Mags.	Av. R.V.	Av. Bt.St.
United States				
Sp'l Pios.	453	108.6	65.1	45.8
Pios.	110,696	63.8	33.9	20.1
Aux. Pios.	28,134	49.1	28.4	12.9
Pubs.	910,305	9.5	7.2	3.5
TOTAL	1,049,588			Baptized: 2,196

Bermuda				
Pios.	67	69.9	32.0	24.6
Aux. Pios.	5	45.0	15.4	14.2
Pubs.	374	11.5	9.4	4.8
TOTAL	446			0.5

Turks & Caicos				
Sp'l Pios.	2	100.0	51.0	51.0
Pios.	19	72.5	43.3	36.3
Aux. Pios.	8	54.3	30.4	18.9
Pubs.	157	11.9	9.1	4.2
TOTAL	186			Baptized: 2

We are happy to report two new peaks for the Turks and Caicos Islands! The total publishers surpassed the peak of 176 set in April 2006 and the 3,881 total hours is an increase of 257 over the peak set in December 2007.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ **Literature offer for May:** The *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. A special effort will be made to visit newly interested ones who attended the Memorial or the special public talk but who are not actively associated with the congregation. The purpose of such visits should be to start a home Bible study with those who have not yet accepted one. **June:** *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* Make a diligent effort to start Bible studies. **July:** *Keep on the Watch!* If the congregation does not have this brochure in stock, please check if nearby congregations have a surplus on hand that you can use. If that is not possible, offer another appropriate brochure that the congregation has in stock. **August:** *Worship the Only True God.* If the congregation does not have this book in stock, please check if nearby congregations have a surplus on hand that you can use. If that is not possible, offer an appropriate brochure that the congregation has in

stock. If a Bible study is started, it is recommended that the *Bible Teach* book be studied.

■ Bodies of elders should review the July 6, 2006, letter regarding disaster preparedness and ensure that they have up-to-date contact information for each publisher. In disaster-prone areas, additional emergency contact information should be obtained. Of course, in addition to emergency situations, it is helpful when publishers communicate with their Congregation Book Study overseer or another elder if they will be away for extended periods, such as when traveling on vacation or business, during a hospital stay, and so forth.

■ Please take note that there will be no special invitation handbill advertising the 2008 district convention. However, we are planning for a significant global campaign in the near future. Further details regarding that arrangement will be provided later.

■ Whenever personal travel plans include attending congregation meetings, an assembly, or a district convention in another land,

your request for information regarding dates, times, and locations must be directed to the branch office that oversees the work in that land. Addresses of branch offices are listed on the last page of the current *Yearbook*.

■ Donations for the worldwide work that are made by check at district conventions should be made payable to "Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses." Donations for the worldwide work that are sent directly to the branch office should be made payable to "Watchtower." The branch office's financial address is Watchtower, c/o Treasurer's Office, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483.

■ It is necessary for the branch office to maintain an up-to-date record of addresses and telephone numbers for all presiding overseers and secretaries. If there is a change at any time, the Congregation Service Committee should complete, sign, and send a *Presiding Overseer/Secretary Change of Address* (S-29) form to the branch office promptly. This includes any changes in telephone area codes.

QUESTION BOX

■ Is it appropriate for the audience to applaud after each part on the Theocratic Ministry School and Service Meeting?

When the Creator, Jehovah, founded the earth, "the morning stars joyfully cried out together, and all the sons of God began shouting in applause." (Job 38:7) These angelic sons of God desired to praise Jehovah for his outstanding work of creation, which was a new manifestation of his wisdom, goodness, and power.

It is a fine thing for us to express heartfelt appreciation for the efforts of our broth-

ers and for the material they present. For example, we normally applaud talks and presentations at special gatherings, such as assemblies and conventions. The parts presented there have required additional time and effort to prepare. Our applause shows appreciation not only for the hard work of the speaker but also for the instruction that Jehovah provides through his Word and organization.—Isa. 48:17; Matt. 24:45-47.

What about applauding parts presented on the Theocratic Ministry School and Service Meeting? There are no rules forbidding applause if it is done spontaneously, such as after a student has

completed his first school assignment. However, applause could easily become perfunctory and lose its meaning. Therefore, we normally do not applaud each presentation.

While we might not applaud for most parts on the Theocratic Ministry School and Service Meeting, there are other ways that all of us can express appreciation for the instruction and for the efforts of those who present parts. We can do this by remaining alert and paying close attention to the speakers. And after the meeting, it is often possible personally to express appreciation for their efforts.—Eph. 1:15, 16.

Riches Can Be Yours!

¹ Do you seek greater joy and fulfillment in your life? Do you find pleasure and satisfaction in helping others? Do you desire to increase your service to Jehovah? If you answer yes to any of these questions, then you should consider regular pioneering. Of course, family and other Scriptural responsibilities, as well as health and physical limitations, must be taken into consideration.

² Solomon's divinely inspired writings associate the blessing of Jehovah with material riches. (Prov. 10:22) Today, Jehovah's blessing results primarily in spiritual riches. Such riches overflow for regular pioneers. For instance, they experience the greater happiness of giving to others as they 'buy out the time' from personal pursuits. (Col. 4:5; Acts 20:35) Their labors of love are noticed and appreciated by Jehovah. Such "treasures in heaven" will never diminish in value. (Matt. 6:20; Heb. 6:10) Furthermore, as pioneers keep a 'simple eye' and trust in Jehovah to provide necessities, their relationship with him grows stronger.—Matt. 6:22, 25, 32; Heb. 13:5, 6.

³ The pursuit of material riches often leads to "many senseless and hurtful desires." (1 Tim. 6:9, 10; Jas. 5:1-3) This is never the case with the blessing of Jehovah. Spending a significant portion of their time in the ministry helps regular pioneers maintain spiritual balance and a clear focus on the

more important things. (Phil. 1:10) One brother left his time-consuming career as an engineer to pioneer. He said: "I found my secular work stressful. Not so with pioneering. I now get to help people and teach them the truth. This has been far more fulfilling and challenging."

⁴ **Blessings to Others:** Today, everyone faces "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Tim. 3:1) People everywhere desperately need hope. Kingdom proclaimers rejoice at seeing firsthand that the look of despair on people's faces can change to that of optimism as they respond to the good news. How great that joy is for regular pioneers, who devote more than 800 hours each year to this rescue work!—1 Tim. 4:16.

⁵ Have you been giving serious thought to serving as a regular pioneer? It may require "buying out the opportune time" from less important pursuits. (Eph. 5:15, 16) Many have done so and have simplified their lives, enabling them to cut back on secular work in order to devote more time to Kingdom interests. Can you arrange your affairs to join them?

⁶ Request wisdom from Jehovah to work out a practical schedule. (Jas. 1:5) What blessings can you expect in return? Spiritual riches in abundance! Jehovah will also bless you materially with what you need. (Matt. 6:33) Those who test Jehovah out in this respect will receive "a blessing until there is no more want."—Mal. 3:10.

⁷ How are regular pioneers blessed while bringing blessings to others?

5, 6. What may enable you to become a regular pioneer?

1. Why consider regular pioneering?
2. Mention some of the spiritual riches that regular pioneers acquire.
3. What contrast exists between the pursuit of spiritual riches and the pursuit of material riches?

What to Say About the Magazines

THE WATCHTOWER[®] May 1
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

"The increase of natural disasters in our day has caused some to wonder if we are being punished by God. What do you think? [Allow for response.] Then read 1 John 4:8.] This article explains why God is not responsible for the suffering caused by natural disasters." Feature the article on page 30.

Awake![®] May

Read Matthew 6:10. Then ask: "Have you ever wondered what God's will is for the earth? [Allow for response.] According to the Bible, God had a purpose for the earth from the beginning and that purpose has not changed. This article explains." Feature the article that begins on page 10.

THE WATCHTOWER[®] June 1
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

"One of the best-known Bible stories is that of Noah and the Flood. Do you think that the Flood really happened? [Allow for response.] Interestingly, Jesus referred to it as an actual event. [Read Luke 17:26, 27.] This magazine gives reasons to believe the Flood account and explains the vital lessons taught by it."

Awake![®] June

"Child rearing is challenging, especially when a child reaches adolescence and experiences dramatic changes. Where do you think parents can turn for reliable advice? [Allow for response.] Then read Isaiah 48:17, 18.] This magazine gives some up-to-date suggestions to help parents act with wisdom and understanding."