WATCHTOWER
BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

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TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

How thrilling it is to see Jesus' words being fulfilled before our very eyes: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14) While all Kingdom publishers are fellow workers with God in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work, the pioneers are at the forefront. (1 Corinthians 3:9) You are to be commended for your ongoing efforts to encourage and support them. In this letter, we would like to consider some ways you can assist the pioneers to continue in their precious privilege of full-time service.

Practical Ways to Assist the Pioneers: One reason some pioneers find it necessary to relinquish their privilege of service is health problems. While health care is a personal matter, elders can encourage pioneers to maintain their strength by eating nutritious meals, keeping a reasonable schedule, and getting sufficient rest. If you observe a pioneer who lacks balance in one of these areas, it may be helpful to share an appropriate *Awake!* article on the subject.—*g*97 6/22 11-13; *g*95 6/8 17-19; *g*90 6/8 14-16.

Another reason some stop pioneering is to care for financial obligations. In many cases, changes in circumstances make this unavoidable. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) However, some pioneers have had to discontinue because of a failure to keep their eye simple, becoming preoccupied with material possessions, pleasures, and the anxieties of life. You can help pioneers to maintain a proper balance in such matters by being alert to commend them for their fine example of putting spiritual things first in their lives and by setting a proper example yourself.

Most pioneers make a fine contribution to the peace of the congregation, but at times some have problems getting along with others. How can you assist such ones? By kindly helping them to appreciate that pioneers must be peacemakers. (1 Peter 3:11) As exemplary Christians, they need to pursue peace in all their dealings with others, both inside and outside the congregation. Their being peacemakers will contribute to the joy of the entire congregation and will result in blessings from Jehovah.—*w*91 3/1 20-5.

Perhaps the finest way elders can encourage the pioneers is by working with them in the field ministry on a regular basis. (*ks91* 25) In addition to the interchange of encouragement that takes place when sharing together in this activity, doing this provides you with an opportunity to show a personal interest in them. If a pioneer is experiencing some difficulty, he or she may take advantage of the occasion to discuss it with you. Providing a listening ear and a word of encouragement at such a time may be just what a pioneer needs to continue in full-time service. (Proverbs 25:11) Therefore, make it your aim to work with each of the pioneers in your congregation at least once during the current service year.—Colossians 4:11.

Promote the Pioneer Spirit: Those with the pioneer spirit have a positive attitude toward the ministry and are zealous for fine works. (Titus 2:14) Many publishers would like to pioneer but are unable to do so because of their circumstances. Yet, they do all that they can in the ministry and are supportive of the pioneers. Their attitude and actions reveal that they have the pioneer spirit. Those serving as regular pioneers must also display the pioneer spirit.

How can you as elders promote the pioneer spirit in the congregation? Primarily, by cultivating the pioneer spirit yourselves. When you take the lead in displaying a positive attitude toward the ministry, your example speaks for itself. Others will imitate your zealous spirit, and the entire congregation, especially the pioneers, will benefit. (Hebrews 13:7) Furthermore, Jehovah's blessing will be upon the fine spirit shown by the congregation.—Philippians 4:23.

Pioneers Assist Others: Congregations that have been diligent in implementing the Pioneers Assist Others program are experiencing fine results. Since the new program has now been functioning in most congregations for about six months, Congregation Service Committees should again meet with the book study conductors to make new assignments. The Society's letter to all bodies of elders dated January 20, 1998, instructed these brothers to "consider which publishers would benefit most from assistance" when making assignments. This means that they should consider which publishers *have the most potential to make progress in the ministry* from the assistance being offered. Good discernment should be exercised in this regard.

In some congregations, pioneers have been assigned to assist individuals who were weighed down with intractable personal or spiritual problems and who appeared to have little potential to benefit from the assistance being offered. Such assignments generally produce few positive results and often prove to be draining to the pioneers. Therefore, it is usually advisable for the elders to give shepherding attention to such individuals rather than using the pioneers to assist them. Of course, there is no objection to assigning a pioneer to assist an irregular or inactive one if it is felt that the person will really make progress and is truly in a position to benefit from the program.—See also the September 1998 *Our Kingdom Ministry*, page 4.

We wish to express our appreciation for the fine efforts you are making to assist the pioneers. Regarding such efforts, the words of Hebrews 13:16 well apply: "Do not forget the doing of good and the sharing of things with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." We pray that Jehovah will richly bless your efforts in shepherding the portion of his flock entrusted to your care. Please accept herewith our warm Christian love and greetings.

Your brothers,

Watchtower B. & T. Society
OF NEW YORK, INC.

Note to the Congregation Service Committee: Accompanying this letter is an outline for the December meeting with the regular pioneers. Please arrange well in advance for two elders to conduct this meeting. Other elders may attend. This meeting should be well prepared so that it is an encouragement to the pioneers to go on doing Jehovah's will zealously.