

Dwelling Together in Unity

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“Look! How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!”—Ps. 133:1.

To be studied by all who are members of the Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah’s Witnesses and who are living in Bethel homes. As you study this manual, please look up and read every scripture cited.

This manual is for your use only while you are a member of the Bethel family. It may not be copied, duplicated, or taken away from the home in which you reside. Should you terminate your membership in the Bethel family, this manual must be returned to the Bethel Office along with your Bethel keys and identification card.

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Dwelling Together in Unity

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Dwelling Together in Unity

WELCOME to Bethel! The name Bethel in the Hebrew language literally means “House of God.” (Gen. 28:17-19) The invitation for you to become a member of the Bethel family is like a door opening up to many privileges of service. We are pleased that you have accepted this invitation to come and serve here. (Isa. 6:8) We trust that you, as one wholly dedicated to Jehovah and loyal to his Kingdom by Christ Jesus, will appreciate Bethel. Coming to Bethel will mean a big change in your life. However, we want to make that change as easy as possible for you. Now, how best can this be achieved?

² Let us start at the beginning. When you first learned the truth, you began to make your mind over. You started to fill your mind with proper thoughts. You got these ideas from reading God’s Word, the Bible, together with publications of “the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matt. 24:45) These new truths thrilled you. You quit being fashioned after the old system of things, and you found that by making your mind over, a pleasant, happy new way of living became yours. More than that, you desire to live in the new system of things. So you continue to take in knowledge of Jehovah and his Son because you know that “this means everlasting life.”—John 17:3; Rom. 12:2.

³ If you actually made these changes in your habits and in your personality before coming here, you should find it easy now to adjust further to the Bethel routine and schedules. We admit that living at Bethel is not like living at home with your own family. Yet, it is still one of the best places to be at the present time. Here you are living and serving with those who, in a very real sense, are your spiritual brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers. (Mark 10:29, 30) They love you very much for having volunteered to come and serve with them, and they want to do all they can so that you may feel at home and adjust to Bethel life.

⁴ In some places Bethel families are small, and it is easy to get acquainted with one another; we encourage you to do so. But in other locations throughout the world, Bethel families are much larger, with hundreds of brothers and sisters of various ethnic and cultural

backgrounds living and serving together in unity. In a large Bethel family, it may appear that we are so busy with our routine in the home, printery, and offices or in the field ministry and in attending congregation meetings that we barely have enough time to say a greeting. But do not hesitate to introduce yourself right from the start. We will also try to do the same, as we are all members of the same family. It is a fine custom to greet one another daily as you meet.

⁵ Remember, we who have lived here before you arrived have enjoyed contentment along with our godliness. (1 Tim. 6:6-8) We have acquired certain routines and habits that we find helpful in caring for our assignments. These are based on God's Word, and we accomplish much good as a result. We like it this way, and we hope you will as well. As a new member, you would certainly not expect the Bethel family to change its ways of living and rearrange things to accommodate each new one coming to live at Bethel. Therefore, you yourself will no doubt have to make some changes, but at the same time, we want you to feel that Bethel is your home. We desire that you also be happy and contented and make a success of your Bethel service.

⁶ Bethel is a unique place. You are serving here in cooperation with "the entire association of your brothers in the world." (1 Pet. 5:9) Your appreciation of this unique privilege will grow as you see how your assignment is related to the worldwide preaching of the good news being done by your brothers in the field. Each of us has an assignment, and all of us serve diligently with the same objective. You will find much joy and satisfaction in the busy life you will be leading, "knowing that your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord."—1 Cor. 15:58.

⁷ There is no question that everyone coming to serve at Bethel is in line to receive many benefits. But should receiving benefits be the main reason for our serving here? Certainly not. The motive for wanting to be part of the Bethel family should be primarily, not what we can receive, but what we can give. We want to serve at Bethel out of love for Jehovah and the desire to promote his Kingdom interests. (Matt. 6:33) Our purpose in serving at Bethel should be to "serve for the praise of [Jehovah's] glory" as a united, worldwide Bethel family.—Eph. 1:12.

⁸ To dwell together in unity, it is necessary that we maintain a good relationship with Jehovah God and Jesus Christ as well as with fellow members of the Bethel family. (Ps. 133:1; 1 Cor. 1:10; Col. 3:12-17) This

results in happy relationships with fellow Bethelites—overseers and all other members of the family.—Ruth 2:4; Eph. 6:5-9.

⁹ This manual provides basic information for every Bethel family member. By reading it, each one can become familiar with the special provisions made at Bethel as well as the necessary guidelines and rules that regulate the activities of the family in an orderly manner. This material will not answer every question that may come up, but it will serve as a guide based on the principles of Jehovah’s Word. (Ps. 19:7-10; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17) It should assist you in living here in unity and in enjoying a meaningful and productive life.

¹⁰ We would now like to give you some information about our daily routine. Some of us serve in offices; others do cleaning, serve in the laundries, or cook wholesome meals. Many serve in the printeries, printing and shipping out literature, while others are assigned to farms, producing food. Additionally, we are students of the Bible and are active with local congregations. All of us are dedicated, full-time ministers of God, and we share regularly in preaching and teaching as well as in attending congregation meetings. In addition, we have a program of Bethel family worship that is important and vital. We want you to enjoy these spiritual blessings with us.

Membership in the Bethel Family Is a Serious Responsibility

¹¹ During your first three consecutive years as a member of the Bethel family, you will serve as a provisional member of the Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah’s Witnesses (“the Order”). As such, you are subject to a vow of obedience and poverty. All those in special full-time service, including circuit overseers, missionaries, construction servants, full-time commuters, remote servants, Assembly Hall servants, and special pioneers, are bound by this vow of obedience and poverty. After completing three consecutive years in special full-time service, which is considered to be a “tested-as-to-fitness” period, a determination will be made whether or not to invite you to become a regular member of the Order.

¹² Please note that being a member of this family and the religious order does not give you any special designation that exalts you above your brothers. Members of the Bethel family and others in special full-time service realize the seriousness of their solemn vow, the additional responsibilities, and the sacrifices that come with their assignment.

Spirituality

¹³ The finest assets to Bethel are mature people, spiritual men and women whose “powers of discernment” have been trained to distinguish both right and wrong. (Heb. 5:14) Bethel can help a person grow spiritually. So the longer one remains a member of this family, the more that growth should be noticeable. (1 Tim. 4:15) What are some arrangements to assist in that growth? There is morning worship Monday through Friday of each week. The program helps to get the day off to a good start by means of a consideration of the day’s text, followed by the reading of the Bible. Each member of the family is expected to be in attendance, unless, of course, he or she is ill, is taking personal time away, or has time off because of an adjusted schedule. Also, each one is expected to attend the family *Watchtower* Study every Monday evening. This is most upbuilding and brings points to our attention that we can use at our congregation study. And on Monday nights there are at times other spiritual provisions made for the benefit of the family.

¹⁴ Outsiders are not invited to attend either our program for morning worship or our Monday evening family *Watchtower* Study unless they are overnight guests in the Bethel Home.

¹⁵ We encourage you to be resolved to read a portion of the Bible every day of your life. (Ps. 1:1, 2; Acts 17:11) The importance of staying strong and progressing spiritually, ‘making sure of the more important things,’ cannot be overemphasized. (Phil. 1:10) Thus your life at Bethel will be purposeful, and you will be happy in promoting the interests of Jehovah’s Kingdom.—John 13:17.

¹⁶ In addition to these arrangements, you will have opportunities to associate with a local congregation. There you can assist others by attending congregation meetings and participating in them and by supporting the field activity, much as you did prior to coming to Bethel. Taking full advantage of these provisions is essential to your progress and spiritual growth, enabling you to be a blessing to others.—Ps. 22:22; Heb. 13:15.

Theocratic Organization

¹⁷ Let us now consider some matters you should be familiar with regarding the visible part of Jehovah’s theocratic organization. The Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses, as the faithful and discreet slave,

has the general supervision of the Kingdom interests throughout the earth. (Matt. 24:45-47; Rev. 12:17) The members of the Governing Body are assigned to serve on various committees. Each committee has its individual field of oversight, as briefly outlined here: (1) The *Coordinators' Committee* oversees legal matters as well as the use of the media when it is necessary to convey an accurate picture of our beliefs. This committee also responds to disasters, outbreaks of persecution, and other emergencies affecting our brotherhood anywhere in the world. (2) The *Personnel Committee* appoints members of the Bethel family, including expatriate Bethel family members, part-time and full-time commuters, and construction servants, and it cares for their spiritual and physical welfare. (3) The *Publishing Committee* supervises financial and other business matters relating to worldwide printing, publishing, and shipping operations. It also oversees building activities. (4) The *Service Committee* is concerned with the evangelizing work throughout the world and the organizing of field activities affecting pioneers, special pioneers, missionaries, congregations, circuits, and circuit overseers. It also assists branches in answering questions on judicial matters in congregations. (5) The *Teaching Committee* oversees the instruction provided at conventions, assemblies, and congregation meetings. It also has oversight of Gilead School, the School for Kingdom Evangelizers, the Pioneer Service School, and other schools. In addition, this committee oversees the development of audio and video programs. (6) The *Writing Committee* supervises the preparation of spiritual food in written and electronic form for fellow believers and the general public. It also cares for the organization's website and oversees the translation work done throughout the earth. Additionally, this committee responds to questions about the meaning of certain scriptures and points presented in the publications.

¹⁸ In countries where there is a branch office, the Governing Body appoints a *Branch Committee*. Within its field of jurisdiction, the Branch Committee oversees the activity carried on in its respective branch facilities as well as the activity in the field. Where there is a need for clarification of any point, the Branch Committee consults with the appropriate committee of the Governing Body. In some countries, a Country Committee is appointed. It serves under the oversight of the Branch Committee of another country.

¹⁹ In directing the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making activity, the Governing Body uses a number of corporations throughout the world. The

Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania is a not-for-profit corporation that is used to promote the worldwide Kingdom work. The International Bible Students Association and a number of other legal corporations are also used.

²⁰ So now you have an outline of the worldwide organization that Jehovah is pleased to use for furthering the Kingdom-preaching work in our day. It remains for all of us to support theocratic (God-directed) arrangements loyally and to serve together in unity and peace. If we do so, we can be sure of gaining Jehovah's favor and receiving rich blessings.

²¹ Jehovah has certainly blessed his organization with many material assets—everything that is needed to produce the message in printed form and in various other forms for the worldwide brotherhood of Kingdom proclaimers. We who have been called to live and serve at Bethel feel a responsibility to use these properties and their equipment economically and in the best possible way to praise Jehovah. Whether we are serving in the home, printery, or office, we have a privilege that not many publishers enjoy, for here we are serving our brothers in the field, supplying them with the things they need. We should certainly appreciate this special privilege of service in Jehovah's organization.

²² However, we should not be high-minded, feeling superior to others because of the privilege we have of being a member of the Bethel family or because of the assignment we are given. Rather, we should be humble, lowly in mind. (Ps. 138:6; Phil. 2:1-4) We should appreciate Jehovah's grand organization as a whole and see our small part in it. Every member of the body serves an important function. So whatever assignment you are given contributes to the advancement of Kingdom interests under Jesus Christ's leadership.—1 Cor. 12:20-26.

Assignments and Schedules

²³ Appointed overseers give members of the Bethel family their assignments. We do not ask individuals to choose them, but we feel that the proper spirit is that of Isaiah when he said: "Here I am! Send me." (Isa. 6:8) You should be—and we want you to be—happy in serving Jehovah at whatever you are given to do. Whatever you are asked to do at Bethel is sacred service to Jehovah and is a privilege and an honor.—Ps. 84:10; Rom. 12:1, 2; Col. 3:23, 24.

²⁴ In order for the necessary tasks to be done, you may be moved from one assignment to another. This is largely determined by what the

needs are at a given time. However, efforts are made to make the best use of your capabilities. (1 Pet. 4:10) An assignment is not changed without good reason, but if it is changed, this does not necessarily mean that the overseers are displeased with your service. Of course, if you are lazy or indifferent toward your privileges or if some problem is involved, one of the elders or the one in charge will kindly give you the needed counsel. (Prov. 13:4) When he does, listen carefully, and make the necessary adjustments.

²⁵ Department overseers are experienced. They can teach you if you are willing to learn. You may have a suggestion for improvement in doing your Bethel service. Even though you may have had much experience in certain fields, however, it is the course of wisdom to do things Bethel's way first before you tactfully submit a suggestion. Since there may be a number of ways to accomplish a given task, it is likely that we have already tried other methods and found it best to do things a certain way. You will find that by serving humbly according to instructions, you will have the greatest satisfaction. Be diligent in applying yourself to your assignment at hand, and enjoy the privilege of being a member of this united Bethel family.—Prov. 10:4; 21:5.

²⁶ You are expected to start on time and not to leave until the designated time. (Luke 16:10) It is important to maintain the habit of being punctual. The normal workday is eight hours in length. Depending upon the type of assignment, the distances involved, and the local circumstances, the time for the beginning and ending of the workday may vary from place to place. Brothers who are 70 years of age and older and sisters who are 50 and older may return to their rooms before the Bethel workday officially ends if they feel it is necessary. Or they may prefer to take a rest after the noon meal before returning to their assignment.

²⁷ At times you may be required to put in extra hours to take care of necessary assignments. Additionally, you may be given dish duties, lobby duties, watchman duties, and possibly other assignments. There is no arrangement to have an equal amount of time off for these additional periods of service. Really, we should be happy to render this extra service.

²⁸ During the workday, it is important that each one realizes that he should not leave his assignment without permission from the overseer in charge. When we are given an assignment, we should not use part of the time for personal or congregation matters. This would include sending personal electronic or text messages. We can be sure that Jehovah will bless the efforts of those who are diligent.—Prov. 22:29.

²⁹ Assignments and schedules in the branches are arranged by the Branch Committee.

Personal Time Away

³⁰ All Bethel family members are granted 12 basic days of personal time away on September 1 for the new service year. A service year begins on September 1 and ends on August 31 inclusive. Those who are not transferring from another field of special full-time service and who enter Bethel service after September 1 are given a prorated amount of basic personal time away for the remaining full months in the current service year. This is credited on a person's start date in Bethel service. For example, one who starts Bethel service on March 1 would receive six days of personal time away upon his arrival, one day for each complete month left, March through August. One who starts Bethel service on June 5 would receive two days of personal time away for July and August. A person who transfers from another field of special full-time service to Bethel service would retain the personal time away he had already accumulated.

³¹ There is also a beneficial arrangement for granting additional personal time away each service year until a person reaches the *maximum annual credit of 30 days* of personal time away. There are three provisions explained below for accumulating additional days of personal time away. All additional days of personal time away are credited on September 1 for those in special full-time service. If a person enters special full-time service after September 1, none of the additional days of personal time away described below will be prorated to him for that service year.

³² A *seniority credit* is based on the number of years a person has been in full-time service. For every two complete years a person has been in full-time service, he is granted one additional day of personal time away. Consider two examples. After a person has completed two years in full-time service, on September 1 he will be granted 12 basic days plus 1 additional day for his seniority, making a total of 13 days. A person who has completed 15 years in full-time service would be granted 12 basic days plus 7 additional days for his seniority, making a total of 19 days. If a person has had a break or breaks in his full-time service history, his seniority will be the combined total of days spent in full-time service assignments.

³³ An alternative to the seniority credit is an *age credit*. Some members of the Bethel family have not served for many years in full-time service and thus do not receive many additional days of personal time away based

on their full-time service seniority. As shown in the following chart, those 45 years old and older may benefit from this age credit. For example, those reaching 45 years of age prior to completing 12 years of full-time service are granted six additional days of personal time away each year, the same as if they had completed 12 years of full-time service. Those reaching 65 years of age prior to completing 36 years of full-time service are granted the maximum of 18 additional days of personal time away each year. As is true of the seniority credit, the age credit progressively increases every two years until a person reaches the maximum number of 30 days of personal time away per year. A person will receive either the seniority credit or the age credit, whichever is greater, on September 1.

Age on September 1	Additional Personal Time Away (days)
45-46	6
47-48	7
49-50	8
51-52	9
53-54	10
55-56	11
57-58	12
59-60	13
61-62	14
63-64	15
65 and older	18

³⁴ In certain branches some members of the Bethel family are appointed as expatriate Bethel family members. These special full-time servants qualify to receive a *foreign-service credit* of seven additional days of personal time away on September 1. This provision takes into consideration the special nature of their work in a foreign land. This credit of seven additional days is added to the basic time and additional days based on seniority or age, previously described. Individuals benefiting from the foreign-service credit will not receive more than 30 days per service year. Any exceptions should be approved by the appropriate Governing Body committee. Expatriate Bethel family members are credited this time so that occasionally they are in a position to visit their homeland or elsewhere at their own expense, if they choose to do so.

³⁵ Members of the Bethel family are normally allowed to arrange their personal time away when they prefer but after it has been credited. They are allowed to divide the time as they wish, subject to the requirements at Bethel but may not take less than a half day at a time. Before planning any personal time away, they should be sure of how much time they have

available. Except between a husband and a wife, personal time away days may not be shared with another person.

³⁶ Members of the Bethel family may accumulate personal time away from one year to the next. It is wise to save a few days for unexpected needs.

³⁷ Each person should submit a time away notice prior to taking personal days. This would normally be done no less than one week in advance. If while taking personal time away an unexpected situation arises and requires a person to take additional time away, he should communicate with the Bethel Office. Upon returning to Bethel, he should submit a notice for the additional days taken. Requests for personal time away credits should be forwarded to the Branch Committee to be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the situation. If you have any questions about personal time away, feel free to speak to those handling this matter in the Bethel Office.

Time Away to Attend a Regional Convention

³⁸ All those in special full-time service at Bethel may be granted one and a half days off to attend a regional convention. If the regional convention is held from Friday to Sunday, then one full day off could be used on Friday. The remaining half day off could be used immediately before the convention on Thursday afternoon or immediately after on Monday morning for travel or rest. This provision may be used regardless of the distance of the convention from Bethel.

Leave of Absence

³⁹ After one is in full-time service for a number of years, some serious emergency may arise or some Scriptural responsibility may require an individual to spend a few days or a week or two helping loved ones. Under such circumstances, a person may ask about the possibility of having time off to care for the problem. The person's circumstances will be considered when determining whether to grant the time or to suggest that he terminate his Bethel service and handle the problem. Then later he may reapply for Bethel service.

Secular Work While at Bethel

⁴⁰ Those who volunteer to come to Bethel need to keep in mind the purpose for which they are here, namely, to advance Kingdom interests.

They need to remember the words of the apostle Paul, who wrote to the congregation of Christians in Philippi: “I have learned to be self-sufficient regardless of my circumstances. I know how to be low on provisions and how to have an abundance. In everything and in all circumstances I have learned the secret of both how to be full and how to hunger, both how to have an abundance and how to do without. For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power.”—Phil. 4:11-13.

⁴¹ For your spiritual blessing, certain rules are set in regard to Bethel service and secular work. Members of the religious order are required to take a vow of obedience and poverty. Thereafter, you should not engage in secular employment without permission while you are under this vow. While taking personal time away, you are released from your vow as it applies to secular work. However, there is no release from the vow during evenings or weekends of the regular week of Bethel activity. To work secularly on an evening or a weekend, at least one half day of personal time away must be used. Remember that material possessions do not bring lasting happiness. A relationship with Jehovah is far more valuable than material things, as Jesus illustrated at Luke 12:19-21.

⁴² If an emergency situation arises, such as needing some financial assistance, a Bethelite should check with the Branch Committee to determine what could be done.

Balancing Bethel Service With Other Activities

⁴³ There is always a need for us to keep a proper balance between our assignment at Bethel and our activity in the congregation. We want to be active in the congregation, attending meetings and participating in the field service, because this is also part of our sacred service to Jehovah. All of us need to feed spiritually at Jehovah’s table, both at Bethel and in the congregation.

⁴⁴ Since we enjoy so many conveniences at Bethel, we should be able to plan for a reasonable and regular share in preaching the good news of the Kingdom along with the publishers in our congregation. However, if a conflict arises between our assignment at Bethel and activities in the congregation, naturally our Bethel assignment should take priority. As a reminder, the following statement appears in your application for membership in the Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah’s Witnesses:

“This application is an expression of my personal desire to be a member of the Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah’s Witnesses (“the Order”). If accepted, I will give my assignment of service priority over all other activities. I will be diligent in taking full advantage of the provisions for study and discussion of God’s Word that are made for members of the Order. I will also share regularly in the field service and in the meetings of the congregation which I attend. I will at all times conduct myself in full harmony with all regulations that apply to those in special full-time service—such as matters having to do with secular work and the high standards for dress and grooming—as well as the counsel of God’s Word that applies to all Christians. I will be content and satisfied with the modest support that I receive from the Order as long as I am privileged to continue in the Order. Should I choose to leave the Order or should the Order determine that I no longer qualify to serve in the Order, I will not expect any remuneration. (Matt. 6:30-33; 1 Tim. 6:6-8; Heb. 13:5) I recognize that the Order has the right to determine if and when my membership should be terminated.”

Vow of Obedience and Poverty

⁴⁵ Each new member of the Order takes the Vow of Obedience and Poverty to the Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah’s Witnesses, the text of which is as follows:

Accordingly, in harmony with the intensity of purpose reflected in the words of Ecclesiastes 5:4, I vow as follows:

1. In the spirit of the inspired words of the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 6:8) and the prophetic expression of the psalmist (Ps. 110:3), to offer myself to do whatever is assigned to me in the advancement of Kingdom interests wherever and in whatever category of service I am assigned by the Order;

2. While a member of the Order, to live the simple, nonmaterialistic lifestyle that has traditionally existed for members of the Order;

3. To be submissive to the theocratic arrangement for members of the Order (Heb. 13:17);

4. To devote my best full-time efforts to my assignment;

5. To abstain from secular employment without permission from the Order;

6. To turn over to the local organization of the Order all income received from any work or personal efforts in excess of my necessary living expenses, unless released from this vow by the Order;

7. To accept such provisions for Provisional or Regular Members of the Order (be they meals, lodging, expense reimbursements, or other) as are made in the country where I serve, regardless of the level of my responsibility or the value of my services;

8. To be content and satisfied with the modest support that I receive from the Order as a Provisional or Regular Member as long as I am privileged to serve in the Order and not to expect any remuneration should the Order determine that I no longer qualify to serve in the Order or in the unlikely event that I should choose to leave the Order (Matt. 6:30-33; 1 Tim. 6:6-8; Heb. 13:5);

9. To abide by the principles set out in God's inspired Word, the Bible, in publications of Jehovah's Witnesses, and in policies dispensed by the Order (including any manuals or guidelines specifically applicable to members of the Order in my category of service), and to follow the directions of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses; and

10. To accept readily any decision made by the Order regarding my membership in the Order.

⁴⁶ With this in mind, you may need to make some adjustments in your thinking or activities from time to time. Some members of the family are young and lack the experience of those who have been serving for many years. Some may need to put away certain former ways and habits in order to be balanced and to fit in with Bethel life and its high standard.—Eph. 4:22-24; 1 Pet. 4:3-5.

⁴⁷ Balance is also needed in other respects. For example, there can be danger in allowing social affairs to overshadow our Bethel service. While weekends and evenings are properly used for congregation activities—and perhaps some recreation—we must be reasonable in what we do so that we get proper rest, enabling us to be ready to care for our assignment the next

morning. We should not be exhausted from our activity on the weekend but, rather, should be refreshed and relaxed, ready to attend morning worship on Monday and to get to our assignment on time. These suggestions are made to help you to be balanced in your service here at Bethel and in the congregation and thus to qualify to continue serving as a member of the Bethel family.

⁴⁸ As a new member of the family, you will have many things to learn about Bethel and its operation, and you will no doubt have some adjustments to make. You may have to get accustomed to living with a group of fellow Christians in an institutional setting. Especially during your first year of training, you will be given encouragement and assistance to help you to achieve balance in your theocratic activities and to qualify to remain at Bethel. (Rom. 15:1-3) If it is apparent that you do not make sufficient effort or for some other reason do not qualify, it may be that you will be asked to terminate your membership in the Bethel family so as to continue your service in the field.

⁴⁹ Being a member of the Bethel family is a blessed privilege. You should be confident that Jehovah arranged for you to be here and that it was his organization that called you. It is unwise to compare your sacred service at Bethel to any secular occupation. If, however, a problem comes up and you consider leaving Bethel, it would be good to talk to one of the elders at Bethel about your problem before deciding what you will do. You should be sure that your reason for leaving is a proper one. Keep your love for Bethel service strong by giving close attention to your spirituality and by keeping busy in your Bethel assignment and in your congregation.—1 Cor. 15:58.

⁵⁰ If you find it necessary to leave Bethel service, please submit at least a 30-day notice in writing to the Branch Committee.

Equipment and Supplies

⁵¹ No one should purchase equipment and supplies for the branch without proper authorization. No one may obligate the branch to an expenditure in the name of the branch without written approval from the one in charge.

⁵² Books, magazines, all publications, video and audio recordings, and information stored electronically on computers at Bethel may not be removed from the bins, skids, presses, computers, or any department and

taken out of the buildings except by the permission of the overseer in charge. All of these are the property of the organization.

⁵³ No one should operate another person's machine or change the adjustments without authorization. Tools and machinery are provided only for those who are authorized to use them. Dangerous equipment, including such items as woodworking power equipment and garage and machine shop tools, should only be used by those trained and approved to use it. Branch equipment is not for personal use except by special permission from the overseer in charge. It is necessary to caution all to be careful that they do not take equipment or supplies without permission, either from Bethel departments or from their brothers. Taking things without permission is a serious matter that amounts to stealing. One may be directed to leave Bethel for doing so.

Telephones and Computers

⁵⁴ The telephone is a very helpful instrument that can be used to our advantage. As far as possible, personal calls should be made during your time off. If you do receive a telephone call while caring for your assignment, please make your conversation brief. This principle also applies to the use of any communication tool, such as electronic mail, instant messaging services, the Internet, and cellular phones. Encourage friends and family members to communicate with you during your time off.

⁵⁵ Phones are to be used sparingly and mainly in connection with your Bethel assignment. They are not to be used to care for personal or congregation matters while on your assignment. When using the phones, make your calls brief and to the point. After 9:00 p.m. and continuing until 8:00 a.m., the inside *hall* phones should not be used except in cases of emergency. Consideration for your neighbors in this regard will be deeply appreciated by all. You will also want to show consideration for your roommate by not using a personal room phone or cellular phone after he or she has retired for the night.

Room Care and Cleanliness

⁵⁶ You should obtain permission before bringing into your room or office any furniture, equipment, or decorations that may be questionable. Alterations to the room cannot be made without permission. Installations of a permanent nature must remain in the room.

⁵⁷ While you are at Bethel, you should feel that your room is your home—a place where you can relax, rest, study, and enjoy your personal time. It should be a pleasant place to which you can return after the day's activity, and you and your roommate should take a real interest in keeping it clean, comfortable, and appropriate to Bethel life. You may decorate it tastefully and arrange it and its furnishings in a way that will make you feel that it really is your home, though, of course, you will want to avoid worldly trends.

⁵⁸ Each one should make his own bed before going to his assignment, and once a week, he should make up the bed with clean linen.

⁵⁹ Bethel life calls for maintaining high standards of physical, moral, and spiritual cleanness. Everyone at Bethel should be concerned with keeping himself and his room clean. This contributes to good health. There is no reason for anyone to be dirty. Since Bethel has ample provisions for bathing, it is a good practice to bathe or shower daily. Washing before mealtime is essential and is expected of all. Out of consideration for your roommate, the sink or tub should be rinsed after each use.

⁶⁰ Though decorative or ornamental items in good taste may be displayed in your room, papers, magazines, books, and so forth should not be left lying around. Clothing that is not put away detracts from the appearance of the room. This requires more effort for those cleaning your room. Food should be properly stored so as not to attract insects. For the same reason, cooking utensils and equipment as well as one's personal refrigerator must be kept clean.

⁶¹ At your Bethel assignment, keep your desk, tables, and machinery clean. Everything should be left in a tidy condition at the close of the day. Therefore, desks or tables should be cleared of all papers and tools, which should be put in their proper places.

⁶² Work clothes should be placed in the dressing room in the area assigned to you. The dressing rooms and washrooms should be kept clean, and the toilets, sanitary.

Care of the Family

⁶³ When a brother fills out an application and is accepted, it is with the understanding that he is strong and healthy with nothing seriously wrong with him. Bethel assists the family in maintaining good health by providing clean rooms, comfortable sleeping quarters, wholesome food,

and good conditions under which to live and carry on our sacred service. However, with respect to proper hygiene, cooperation on the part of all is essential. Sufficient rest and sleep are also important. Be moderate in your entertainment and in your eating and drinking habits. Every form of overindulgence should be avoided.—Prov. 21:17; 23:20, 21; Luke 21:34.

⁶⁴ It is a good thing for members of the family who are not feeling well to report to the one(s) in charge of health care. Advice will be given to the individual that may help him recover in a short time. If it is believed necessary to call a doctor, the brother in charge will not hesitate to do so.

⁶⁵ If before coming to Bethel you had a health problem that may now require surgery or extensive dental or other health care, it is not the responsibility of the branch to arrange for such matters. Such things should have been handled before you accepted the invitation to serve at Bethel.

⁶⁶ If after arriving at Bethel you become chronically ill and are unable to keep the schedule and routine of Bethel service and activity, it would be better for you to return home, where you can give close attention to your health.

⁶⁷ Some branches are able to arrange for medical and dental care as well as for the services of a barber and others for the benefit of the family. Each branch arranges for what is practical under the local conditions.

Accidents

⁶⁸ Bethel has first-aid supplies and equipment suitable for the size of the family. Whenever possible, a capable, sympathetic, experienced brother is assigned to oversee this. Also, an assistant is available to help provide proper care in the case of serious injury or illness. If a serious injury occurs, either a doctor is consulted or the injured person is taken to a hospital. Then a full and accurate written report of the accident is made for the Branch Committee. Those having oversight should take steps to make proper changes and give appropriate counsel so as to prevent similar accidents in the future.

⁶⁹ It is the responsibility of each person living at a branch facility to adhere to established safety practices and requirements. How each person views safety is an expression of his spirituality. Therefore, it is essential that everyone give attention to safety at all times, whether in the home, office, printery, or elsewhere. Keep in mind that there is always danger near moving machinery. Therefore, care should be taken by all those operating

machines and by those cleaning around them. Do not take chances. Always follow instructions when cleaning or adjusting machines. Do not clean machines or use rags on them except when the machines are stopped and the power is switched off. Machine parts can be purchased, but fingers and hands cannot.

⁷⁰ Recreation and relaxation have their place in our lives, but sometimes more brothers are injured when engaging in sports activities than when caring for their Bethel assignment. So when engaging in recreation, guard against the competitive spirit, which calls for winning at all costs.—Gal. 5:26.

Dining Room

⁷¹ Mealtimes should be pleasant and enjoyable occasions for all. While brothers and sisters at some branches enjoy cafeteria-style meals or eat certain meals in their room, others are provided assigned seating. If you are assigned to a particular table, then out of consideration for others and respect for the Bethel arrangement, you should be seated before the beginning of the meal. If it is necessary to leave the table before the closing prayer, permission should be obtained from the table head. You should also inform the table head beforehand, whenever possible, if you will not be present at the table.

⁷² Good table manners are always appreciated. If you are not sure what constitutes proper table manners, speak with an elder about any question you may have. Elders should be setting a good example at the table and encouraging a friendly spirit among all. They should kindly remind others of any improvements needed in their table manners. Usually this is best done privately.

⁷³ It is proper for brothers to converse at mealtimes, but we should keep our voices at a reasonable level so that others are not disturbed. Consideration for others and good table manners are also manifested in passing the food. It will be appreciated by others if when the food is passed, you take only a proportional amount of what is in the dish. Do not take more food on your plate than what you will eat. We would be using the contributions of our brothers wastefully if we were to leave food on our plates. Jesus said that nothing should be wasted. (John 6:12) After the general dismissal of the family by prayer, if there is food left over on the tables, it is all right to take a moderate amount of it with you. However,

no dishes or tableware belonging to Bethel should be taken from the dining room.

⁷⁴ We should always come to the dining room neatly and modestly dressed. It is disrespectful to come to regular meals wearing unclean clothing, printery or farm work clothes, or styles of clothing that are inappropriate and not in good taste.

Economy

⁷⁵ Since the Bethel family is supported through the voluntary contributions of devoted brothers throughout the world, all members should practice economy and avoid waste. This means that everyone should be conservation-minded. We should not waste anything, be it food, water, heat, electricity, supplies, printing materials, or anything else. Those preparing and processing food will be conscious of not being wasteful of the food that other brothers have worked hard to produce or that costs money to buy. Lights should be turned off when not needed. Be sure to turn off water faucets completely. These are a few of the many ways in which you can help to economize just by being careful.

⁷⁶ When you are given machinery to operate or tools to use, you should take good care of them. Be sure to oil and clean your machines according to the schedule established by those having oversight. If equipment is lost or broken, this should be reported immediately. If repairs are required, this should be reported in writing. Branch buildings should be kept in good condition inside and out.

⁷⁷ Where there are elevators, those who need to go up or down more than three flights of stairs are permitted to use them. Those who are ill, infirm, or over 35 years of age may use the elevators at any time.

⁷⁸ Heating or air-conditioning equipment should be turned off in a room when it is not occupied. If you are in a room that gets too warm, turn off the heat. Never have the windows open and the heat or air-conditioning turned on at the same time. When it becomes a little cool in the room, you can easily put on a sweater or another garment so as to conserve fuel. We should all want to practice economy and avoid wasting the fine provisions that Jehovah has given us through the contributions of our brothers.

Conduct, Dress, and Grooming

⁷⁹ A Christian should certainly have good morals. Jehovah hates what is bad, and we should imitate him in this. (Ps. 97:10; Eph. 5:1) He

hates those who lie and takes no pleasure in a thief, an evildoer, or a busybody in other people's matters. (Prov. 6:16-19; 26:17; 1 Pet. 4:15) It is expected that all who become members of the Bethel family will have long ago stopped any unclean, filthy habits or unscriptural practices that they might have engaged in prior to learning the truth, and it is expected that they are now truthful and honest in all their ways. (2 Cor. 7:1; Rev. 22:11) No one needs to use filthy language to express ideas. (Matt. 12:35-37; Col. 3:8, 9) Nor is there any room in the Bethel family for obscene stories and jokes. Our speech and language should be positive and uplifting. If it is, we will be in harmony with the Christian congregation's way of doing things. (Prov. 26:18, 19; Eph. 5:4, 5; 1 Tim. 4:12; Jas. 3:10, 11) If a person has in his possession, makes use of, or brings into Bethel pornographic literature, morally corrupting music, or video recordings that feature violence, demonism, or sexual immorality or if he views pornographic material on the Internet, a determination will be made whether he qualifies to remain at Bethel or not.

⁸⁰ Alcoholic beverages may be brought into the home, but they must be used in moderation in harmony with local legal guidelines for drinking alcoholic beverages. Both heavy drinking and drunkenness are condemned by Jehovah and will not be tolerated. (Prov. 23:29-34; Eph. 5:17-19) Overindulgence will call into question an individual's Christian qualifications and may result in his being asked to leave Bethel. (Rom. 14:16-18) If it has not been your custom to use alcoholic beverages before coming to Bethel, there is no reason to start now just because you may see others using them.

⁸¹ Proper respect for the opposite sex and for the same sex must always be maintained. Jehovah condemns fornication, adultery, and homosexuality. (Rom. 1:26-28, 32; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10) It is required that you leave the door of your room wide open and be in full view of passersby if you are alone with one of the opposite sex who is not your marriage mate, parent, fleshly brother or sister, or other close relative. The same principle applies to offices. A brother and sister who are not married to each other should never work alone behind closed doors out of the view of others. —1 Tim. 5:2.

⁸² Out of consideration for the best interests of our brothers, we need to make sure that our conduct does not disturb the happy family relationship we enjoy here. We should be able to have others visit us in our rooms

without making undue noise by slamming doors; by loudly playing a radio, a television, or musical instruments; or by having loud conversations. Others in the family may wish to read, study, or sleep. If your roommate wants to sleep, it would be a kindness to turn off any music or the television. Christian behavior calls for reasonableness and understanding. Avoid disturbing others in any manner. This will call for cooperation on the part of all.—1 Cor. 10:23, 24.

⁸³ It is not proper to enter the room of another person without first knocking and then being invited to enter. Nor should we without prior permission enter the room of anyone when he is not at home. The only exception to this is in the case of the assigned housekeeper or authorized Bethel personnel.

⁸⁴ When anyone knows that a Bethelite has been involved in conduct unbecoming a Christian, that person should immediately advise the offender of his or her obligation personally to bring the matter to the attention of an elder at Bethel. The offender may or may not wish to speak directly to a Branch Committee member. He or she may prefer to relate the matter to another elder in the Bethel family and have him inform the committee. The one having knowledge of the offense should make a report to the Branch Committee so that the organization will be kept clean.—Lev. 5:1.

⁸⁵ The elders will give needed counsel and reproof to any in our midst who continue to cause problems, stir up trouble, assume an independent attitude, or lord it over their brothers. (1 Pet. 5:1-3, 5) They will deal with such offenders in a kind, loving, and understanding yet firm way. If such individuals change their course of action and repent, mercy will be extended to them. (Prov. 28:13) But those who are unwilling to be guided and molded by God's spirit and counsel do not qualify to be part of the Bethel family and will be asked to leave Bethel.

⁸⁶ Those who have dedicated themselves to Jehovah should never give anyone a cause to point disapprovingly at Jehovah's organization; they should never act improperly in public or in private. What you do is observed by others, and wrong conduct can cause them to believe that the rest of our family act the same way. Let your actions be based on the principles of truth and righteousness. Love your neighbor as yourself. If you do this, you will conduct yourself properly toward your brothers and all other people.—Gal. 5:19-26; Eph. 5:15-18; 1 Pet. 4:1, 2.

⁸⁷ In these evil days, we need to pay more than the usual attention to the Scriptures so that we will not be overtaken by the customs and spirit of this wicked system of things. (1 Cor. 2:12; Heb. 2:1-3) In this regard, our dress and grooming should be modest and reflect the dignity of the God whom we worship. (1 Tim. 2:9, 10) We should adorn the teaching of our Savior, God, in all things. (Titus 2:10) As brothers and sisters, we should wear neat, clean clothes not only when coming to all meals, including weekend meals if provided in the dining room, but also when walking the streets to and from our assignments and when attending the Monday night *Watchtower* Study. We should not be extreme, overly casual, sloppy, or indifferent in the way we dress, in order not to stumble others in this regard. (2 Cor. 6:3, 4) We should wear clothes that befit Christian ministers even during our leisure time. That would rule out tight-fitting or frayed jeans and slacks as well as any kind of revealing clothing that brings worldly sloppiness or sensuality into the Bethel family. T-shirts bearing slogans are unacceptable at Bethel. Clothes should be appropriate to the nature of our assignment, yet the style and condition of such clothes should reflect the dignity of the individual as well as that of the Bethel family.

⁸⁸ As a member of the Bethel family, you should help any of your guests to meet these same standards when they are visiting Bethel.

⁸⁹ It is proper for the elders to give appropriate counsel to any member of the family whose dress and grooming may not meet the Bethel standard. If there are any questions on these matters, those charged with oversight will handle them. The Bethel family should serve as a model for the visitors who come here. They accept what they see here as criteria for their own attitude, conduct, and way of life.

Resolving Problems

⁹⁰ Since we are imperfect, problems will arise from time to time, either of a personal nature or in connection with our Bethel assignment. If they do arise, we have Scriptural direction for settling them quickly and peaceably. Whenever possible, differences should be settled privately between those involved. This is Scriptural. (Matt. 5:23, 24) Go to your brother first. If you cannot settle matters, then feel free to speak to an elder at Bethel. He will assist you, with a view to preserving a peaceful spirit in the Bethel Home.—Rom. 14:19.

⁹¹ If a problem develops that has to do with your Bethel assignment, it is best to talk with the department overseer, who is usually an elder. Normally he would be in the best position to see the full picture and to help resolve the problem. However, if a problem of a personal nature should arise, you may go to any elder in whom you feel you can confide. If it is urgent and you wish to leave your assignment to talk with an elder at Bethel about a personal problem, you should mention this to your overseer and get permission to leave. If the problem needs immediate attention, the elder will do whatever may be necessary to resolve it. Or he may decide to arrange to meet with you at a later time so as not to disrupt the assigned activity.

⁹² If a married sister has a problem, she should talk this over first with her husband. (Eph. 5:22-24) If the problem is related to her assignment, her husband may suggest that she go to her overseer to resolve it or he may wish to accompany her when she talks to the overseer. If necessary, they may take the problem to the Branch Committee for assistance in resolving it. Single sisters should follow the same basic procedure as single brothers if difficulties arise. Single sisters may approach any elder at Bethel for counsel. It may also be helpful for younger sisters to get a more balanced view of things by speaking with some of the older sisters. (Titus 2:3-5) But if some problem is of a serious nature that would appropriately be handled by elders, single sisters should not hesitate to go to them for assistance.

⁹³ If problems are allowed to grow and ill feelings spread, personal differences become magnified and our theocratic service at Bethel suffers. Then we do not gain full joy and contentment from our service. Perhaps there are many reasons why problems develop, but there is no reason why they should continue unresolved. (Jas. 3:2, 14-18) So take advantage of the provision of elders to help solve your problems. They are concerned with the well-being of the family and will be pleased to assist you to overcome any difficulties so as to enable all to dwell together in unity.

Allowance and Personal Expense Account

⁹⁴ Every member of the family receives an allowance for his expenses each month. The Publishing Committee determines what the limits of the allowance will be for all of those serving in the branches.

⁹⁵ We also have an arrangement whereby each member of the Bethel family has what is called a Personal Expense Account (PEA). It is for one's

personal needs, incidental medical expenses, and so forth. This account is customarily credited only once a year, at the end of the calendar year, and thus would not be drawn on until such credit is given, except for those going to Gilead or those leaving special full-time service. A certain amount, depending on what is approved by the Publishing Committee, is stipulated for each full month of service at Bethel, and this lump sum for the number of months served in a calendar year is credited at the end of the calendar year and available thereafter. You may request funds from your PEA up to the total that has been credited. Anyone going to Gilead or leaving special full-time service before the start of a calendar year may request PEA funds for the months he has served, and he will be given those funds.

Security and Keys

⁹⁶ We are sure you recognize that it is very important to keep alert to maintaining the security of Bethel, for we are living in perilous times hard to deal with. Any keys that are issued to you as a member of the Bethel family should be treated as a trust from the branch. Loss or carelessness in handling them will make it necessary to determine whether you should be entrusted with any keys. Keys are nontransferable. They are private property. They are not to be loaned to others. *It is not permissible to duplicate keys.* If you lose a key, the loss should be reported immediately to the Bethel Office or to the one who issued the key to you.

⁹⁷ Whenever you enter or leave any of the branch buildings, it is your responsibility to check to see that the door locks securely behind you if there is no attendant on duty.

⁹⁸ Each one of us must be concerned about protecting the branch property. It shows a lack of love and appreciation to treat the matter of security lightly. In some Bethel premises, it is advisable to have a night watchman on duty. Each branch arranges a suitable system of security, taking into consideration local circumstances.

⁹⁹ It is essential that we leave or enter the buildings only at the authorized exits or entrances. In some Bethel buildings, there are alarms on some of the exit doors to ward off intruders. When Bethel members improperly use such exits, they cause extra concern for those on duty who must try to locate an apparent intruder and reset the alarm. If anyone shows disregard for the security of Bethel by disobeying the requirements,

he may be directed to leave Bethel. Your love for your brothers and your own trustworthiness should impel you to assist in keeping the Bethel family safe.

¹⁰⁰ All of us should feel free to ask people entering the premises to identify themselves if we do not know them or if there are other reasons to question their presence. None of us should be offended if someone asks us to identify ourselves, for we are all interested in keeping the home secure. Compliance with rules in this regard shows that we recognize our own personal responsibility for the security of Bethel.

¹⁰¹ In some branches, such as the United States, the Bethel family is very large. Each member of the family is given an identification card that he is to carry with him at all times, and he is to show it, if required, upon entering the home.

¹⁰² If and when you terminate your Bethel service, you should return all your Bethel keys, Bethel identification card, and this manual, *Dwelling Together in Unity*, to the Bethel Office. Please do not take such with you upon your departure from Bethel.

Visitors

¹⁰³ Most of us like to entertain visitors from time to time—perhaps family members or friends from the congregation. In order for the arrangement to function smoothly, certain procedures have to be observed. We are setting out some of them herewith as a guide.

¹⁰⁴ When visitors who are approved to stay overnight come into the home, usually someone appointed by the Bethel Office sees to it that they are registered. Overnight visitors should not be brought into the home without being properly registered. When tours are provided, the visitors should be taken along approved tour routes. Normally we have tour guides assigned for such service.

¹⁰⁵ Because we want you to feel that this is your home, we make arrangements when possible to accommodate your friends and relatives overnight. If you would like to have your parents or other close relatives or friends in the truth stay overnight, you should check with the brother who has the oversight of making such arrangements to see if you can have them at the time you would like. If arrangements can be made, your guests may stay for up to two nights in a guest room.

¹⁰⁶ Guests in the home are welcome to be present for morning worship and breakfast as well as other meals and meetings during the time they are overnight guests. You should advise your guests ahead of time to dress modestly in line with Bethel standards when visiting here at any time, not only when coming to meals or attending meetings at Bethel.

¹⁰⁷ If you would like to have guests in for a noon or an evening meal and they are not overnight guests, you may ask the one having oversight of the guest arrangement if there is space in the dining room. Guests should not be brought to any meals without permission. To do so would show a lack of respect for the arrangement. Those who are not overnight guests should not be brought to morning worship at breakfast time or to meals on weekends.

¹⁰⁸ When you have guests in the home, you are responsible for them. They should not be left to move about the home unaccompanied unless they are overnight guests. When guests are on-site, it is the responsibility primarily of the host to ensure that they are safe. Of course, all in the family should kindly and lovingly assist these ones if they are unsure of where to go, how to get to their vehicle on pedestrian pathways, and how to get around any restricted areas.

¹⁰⁹ A word of caution: As mentioned earlier in this manual, when you have a person of the opposite sex alone with you in a room and that person is not your marriage mate; one of your parents; or a fleshly brother, sister, or close relative, the door of your room should be left wide open.

¹¹⁰ If you have guests in your room, you should inform them, as necessary, of the need to observe proper decorum and not to become loud and boisterous. We should always remember that we are sharing the Bethel Home with other individuals, so we do not want to disturb others by playing loud music, laughing, and talking. What is done in private rooms (whether entertaining guests or not) should be confined to such rooms and not carry over through the walls or down the hallways into the rooms of others.

¹¹¹ We feel sure that no member of the family will take undue advantage of this arrangement for guests and misuse the privilege. If some do, the overseer in charge has the right to decide whether restrictions should be put on them as to the number of individuals they may bring in as guests.

¹¹² Please bear in mind, too, that there are clearly defined arrangements for having guests stay overnight at Bethel. Furthermore, it is not proper for

a Bethel family member other than your roommate to stay in your room overnight. Bethel Office approval is required for any exceptions to this.

Marriage

¹¹³ When individuals are called to Bethel, it must be decided whether to select a married couple or a single person, a brother or a sister. Recommendations are made by Branch Committees to the Personnel Committee with regard to those who are desired for Bethel service. Assignments at Bethel require healthy, strong people, and usually single individuals are brought in to serve. A few married couples may be invited, but as a general rule, the greater portion of Bethel assignments are best cared for by single brothers.

¹¹⁴ As time passes, it may be that a single person determines that he or she would like to be married. (1 Cor. 7:36-38) So the question arises about what arrangement there is for those who are single and interested in marrying but who would like to continue in their Bethel service.

¹¹⁵ After serving at Bethel for at least a year or perhaps a number of years, a brother or a sister might wish to marry someone who is also interested in Bethel service. He may make inquiry as to the possibility of marrying and continuing in Bethel service. However, he should have in mind that he is relatively new after only one year, so it is not likely that approval would be granted to marry and continue in service at Bethel with his marriage mate.

¹¹⁶ In all cases, the Personnel Committee will determine whether one who decides to marry and applies to continue in Bethel service will be permitted to do so. Recommendations from Branch Committees who are responsible to care for the activities at Bethel, as well as the particular needs for Bethel personnel, will be considered. The main concern will be the keeping of Kingdom interests first. (Matt. 6:33) As with all Bethel applicants, those serving as full-time pioneers are usually given preference.

¹¹⁷ All who are invited to Bethel must file applications for this service and be willing to abide by the rules for members of the Bethel family. If a Bethel family member is engaged to marry someone who is not a member of the family and they wish to serve at Bethel as a couple, both individuals must fill out Bethel applications and submit them in the usual way for

consideration by the Branch Committee. Likewise, if two single members of the Bethel family become engaged to marry and desire to continue serving at Bethel, both should fill out new Bethel applications and submit them in the usual way for approval. This is necessary because they are changing their status from that of single persons to that of married persons.

¹¹⁸ If any member of the Bethel family who has served for the minimum time agreed wishes to marry someone and live outside the family, we wish him Jehovah's rich blessing. We encourage him to make every effort to stay in full-time service.

¹¹⁹ When a person comes to Bethel, it should be with the thought of making it his career if possible. We do not want to minimize or take lightly our privilege of Bethel service. If someone desires to leave Bethel service for some personal reason, let him continue to seek Jehovah's blessing. He should always have an attitude like that of Jesus, who said: "Not as I will, but as you will." (Matt. 26:39) The fine training a person receives during his Bethel service can be of much benefit wherever he serves in association with other congregations of Jehovah's people.

Keeping Confidences

¹²⁰ Remember, you are a member of a family and so should be able to keep the confidence of the family and the organization. There are many things said to the family, perhaps by the one presiding at the head of the Bethel table or by others, that are for the family only. It is not proper to communicate with brothers outside Bethel concerning private Bethel family matters; new publications that may be planned, translated, or manufactured; letters that are being printed; or matters discussed at the Bethel table that strictly involve our family. The literature and magazines of the faithful and discreet slave are published anonymously, and no one should reveal who the writers are. We encourage you to keep in touch with your loved ones, particularly your parents, whether they are in the truth or not, for this is one way you can show honor to them. (Eph. 6:2) Your mother and father, especially if they are Jehovah's Witnesses, are going to be interested in knowing how you are doing, and there are many things that you can write to them about. However, you should not write about matters that are confidential to the Bethel family, nor should you spread harmful gossip about others.—Prov. 11:13; 20:19; 26:20-22.

¹²¹ Confidential matters in the department where you serve should not be conveyed to others, even to fellow members of the Bethel family. If difficulties relating to confidential matters do arise at your Bethel assignment and you feel a need to talk to someone, it is proper to speak to your overseer or perhaps to another elder at Bethel. It would not be proper to discuss such confidential matters with others in the family who are neither able to see the problem from all angles nor able to do anything about it. (Prov. 15:22; 25:9) The course of wisdom is to keep confidences. Keeping confidences is a mark of a mature person.

Godly Devotion Along With Self-Sufficiency

¹²² Bethel offers a unique opportunity to enjoy a happy and productive life of service to Jehovah and to our fellowman. Here one has a large share in promoting the worldwide preaching and teaching program started by Christ Jesus almost 2,000 years ago. (Matt. 28:19, 20) Our performing these labors of love with eagerness and with the desire to be of help to others will certainly result in grand blessings for us. Serving at Bethel is not like working in the secular world, where individuals are often in competition, seeking to outdo others for selfish gain. Our service and worship are rendered in behalf of our Father, Jehovah, and his loving Son, Jesus Christ.

¹²³ While there may be times when you get homesick or discouraged, do not allow negative thinking to cause you to conclude that Bethel is not the best place for you. If you get discouraged at times, speak with some of the older, spiritually mature brothers and sisters who have served for many years at Bethel. We feel sure that when you came to Bethel, your friends and family were pleased to see your advancement in rendering sacred service to Jehovah. So do not give up, but keep persevering, looking for Jehovah's direction and blessing. Keep in mind that at Bethel, more than anywhere else, you are able to help many people by your service.

¹²⁴ We urge you to think in terms of not just a minimal amount of time at Bethel but, rather, a longer period in which you can be well trained to make an excellent contribution to Kingdom interests. Since true happiness stems from those things that have to do with spirituality, worship of God, and the fulfillment of God's promises, you will have a good feeling, knowing that you are pleasing Jehovah and that the course of action you are taking leads to eternal life in God's new world.

¹²⁵ It is our hope that now that you are here at Bethel, you will continue to uphold Jehovah's standards of love, truth, and righteousness. Always "trust in Jehovah with all your heart, and do not rely upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he will make your paths straight."—Prov. 3:5, 6.

¹²⁶ We are very glad that you are here. Make Bethel your home. Keep on living and serving here, training yourself with godly devotion as your aim, since it holds promise of everlasting life under God's Kingdom arrangement. More important, godly devotion will contribute to the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty and the sanctification of his glorious name.—1 Tim. 4:7.

¹²⁷ Please be assured of our warm love and best wishes for you.

Your brothers,
Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses