

## Preparing for the Visit

Since home visits are an important aspect in developing spiritual life, we do well to spend some time in preparation. It is advisable that the consistory makes this an item on the agenda prior to the start of the home visit season. The work is greatly enhanced if a theme for the visits is developed and a schedule for all the visits is drawn up beforehand. It is my experience that the members of the congregation sincerely appreciate it when the theme and the visiting schedule are handed out at the beginning of the season. Everyone knows exactly what will be discussed and when they will be visited. As a result, there are very few cancellations.

As office-bearers you must come well prepared. Your attitude will affect the nature of the visit. Those who visit should remember to pray for the Lord's help and guidance beforehand. They must also trust that God who called them to their office will equip them with everything they need to do his will.

Before you step into a particular home, you should be familiar with the names of the children, the occupation of the father, where the children go to school and whether they are of age to go to catechism and Young People's Society. Elders who work diligently in their ward will gain such information through personal and informal contact with both adults and children.

One elder should be prepared to lead the visit and the other should be prepared to end the visit in prayer. This should be decided on well in advance so that both are prepared.

At the start of a new home visit season the consistory should give the congregation an outline of the theme and some of the matters and questions that will be discussed. This way people can pray and study in preparation for the visit. It may be necessary to remind the congregation of the character of the visit, of the need to avoid disruptions such as answering the phone and tending to children that keep coming out of bed, etc.