

FELLOWSHIP FOR ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A HEALTHY BOOK SERVICE

God Initiating the Publication Work

God initiated the publication work. [God is a speaking God](#) (Heb. 1:1). The gospel of John tells us that God is the Word (1:1)...If we did not have the Bible, Christians would suffer an incalculable loss. [The Bible is God's publication work; this is a marvelous thing.](#) (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 209)

God Working through Speaking

The Bible reveals that God's work is carried out through His [speaking](#). In His work of creation God [spoke](#) and it was; He [commanded](#) and it stood (Psa. 33:9). In the Old Testament age all of God's work was carried out [through His speaking](#) to man.... God's work in the New Testament is altogether a matter of the word. The Lord Jesus came to accomplish God's work as the incarnated Word. In the apostolic age the apostles carried out their work mainly through the word... Through His word God's work has been able to advance on the earth through the ages. In church history we can see [the progress of God's word](#). Whenever God's word cannot spread, God's work cannot advance. This has been especially the case among us. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 169)

High and Weighty

I would like to speak an honest word. On the one hand, many people heard Brother Nee preach the word without receiving much benefit, but on the other hand, a great number of people, who never heard him speak, received an indescribable, eternal benefit from his writings. When I began to attend the meetings in Shanghai, I never saw more than five hundred people in attendance; usually there were no more than three or four hundred. According to my observation, maybe less than one hundred of them actually heard and received the truth inwardly. However, eighty or ninety percent of the people who have read Brother Nee's books have received something from what they have read. [The effect of reading publications is greater and more solid than the effect of personally hearing a spoken message.](#) [The value of the publications is high and weighty.](#)

The Cream of the Saint's Understanding

It is neither a boast nor a deception to say that all the books in the Lord's recovery are [the extract of the truths in Christianity](#). They are the crystallization of the study of the Bible and the spiritual life-experiences of Christians throughout the last two thousand years. Hence, [we should endeavor to enter into all these spiritual riches](#) and not waste our time or money on unnecessary pursuits. We should save all our time and money in order to spend them on studying the Bible and spiritual books. (CWWL, 1986, VOL. 2, "The Economy of God and the Mystery of the Transmission of the Divine Trinity," p.449)

ELDERS OVERSEEING THE BOOK SERVICE

The Importance of the Elders in the Book Service

Brother Lee realized the importance of the elders overseeing the book service, since it functions to minister truth and life to the entire church. Hence when he returned to Taiwan from 1984 to 1986, he gathered together coworkers, elders and book room serving ones of each church to retreat for special fellowship regarding the book service. The book room serving ones continue this practice to the present day. [The spiritual health of the church and the saints correlates directly with the reading and enjoyment of the Bible and the ministry publications.](#) Therefore, the book service should be in regular fellowship with the elders to establish and maintain an active and healthy book service to promote the purchase, loaning, giving away, and reading of the ministry books as a vital part of the church's pursuit of the truth.

Brother Lee's Burden for the Elders

As he was completing the life-studies of the New Testament, Brother Lee was very burdened for the elders to lead the saints in to the truth through the life-studies and the New Testament recovery version. [I hope that the elders in each locality will give the saints some help and encouragement so that each household will have a supply of spiritual books. The saints can place a copy in various places within their homes – on the dining table, on their nightstand, on their bathroom counter, and in their kitchen – to make enjoying the Lord's word in every place convenient for all the members of their family and even for their guests.](#) (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 190)

Providing Direction, Encouragement, and Incentive

We [the elders] should help the saints to build up a practice or habit that every day they would spend [at least thirty minutes](#) in the Word... They should study every day either three times for ten minutes each or one time for thirty minutes.... I think we need to remind them week after week, and sometimes the elders need to give the saints some direction, some encouragement, and some incentive. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, p. 325)

Presenting the Truth to All Believers

The higher truths in the Bible are not for special class of believers but for all of God's children (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; Eph. 3:9)... The saints have God-given capacity by which they are able to comprehend much more than we realize (1:17)... We [the elders] should not consider the higher truths that the Lord has shown us from His Word as too difficult for the young ones to understand; rather, [we should be desperate to present these truths to them.](#)" (CWWL, 1983, vol. 2, p. 141)

Educating the Saints for Their Growth

The higher the truth we [the elders] present to the saints, the faster their growth in life will be, but the lower the truth we present to the saints, the slower the growth in life will be. If the elders are in a church do not present certain messages that they think are too high for the saints to understand, they will lower the standard of the truth in that church (cf. 1 Tim. 3:15). The elders must be desperate to raise the standard of the truth in the church year after year. We need to educate the saints in the divine truth and maintain a high standard of the truth (CWWL, 1983, vol. 2, p. 141)

BURDEN AND GOAL OF THE BOOK SERVICE

The Most Important Burden

The most important burden of the book service is not to care for the inventory of the books but to [study and find a way to spread every book into all the homes of the saints in your locality](#), and once the books are in the homes, to find a way to deposit their contents into the saints' hearts (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 191)

Stirring up the Saints' Interest for the Truth

The primary matter is not to promote the books but to stir up the saints interest in pursuing the truth and to encourage them to enjoy reading the spiritual publications... The Lord's word will require that we bear the responsibility to labor willingly to zealously encourage and urge everyone in all local churches to pursue the truth and read the spiritual publications. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, pp. 207-208)

LEARNING THE TRUTH IN THE SERVICE

Being a Pattern to Read and Pursue

The serving ones in the book room should all endeavor to be the first to enter into [a daily exercise of pursuing the truth](#) by a scheduled reading of the Bible and the ministry publications to serve as a living pattern to those they will be serving.

Studying, Speaking, and Writing the Truth

First, we must learn to speak the truth. Our inheritance today is much richer than it was thirty or forty years ago; therefore, our real need is practice. Through practice we will know how to use these riches in an appropriate way. **Second**, we need to spend the time to learn, practice and equip ourselves with these rich truths. It would be excellent if there were such a prevailing atmosphere among us. The co-workers, elders, and serving ones should all be full of the truth and speak the truth in their daily conversations. If our living is according to the truth, this will spontaneously produce an uplifted atmosphere... **Third**, we should not neglect the riches on our bookshelves; instead, we should read, study, discuss, and even write about them. If we can learn a little every day, we will spontaneously and gradually gain a great accumulation of truth. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, pp. 232-233)

PROMOTING READING AND DISTRIBUTION

Creating a Reading Atmosphere

The book service group should regularly coordinate with the elders in setting up activities and events throughout the year to promote the reading of the Bible, ministry publications, and the distribution of books and booklets. The saints in the book service should be patterns of reading, speaking, and distributing publications. **Then over a period of time, a reading culture and atmosphere will develop in your local church.**

BECOMING A GOOD MINISTER OF CHRIST

Brother Lee was very burdened that the saints would become a good minister of Christ, not only to the saints meeting in the Lord's recovery, **but to all the children of God.** This burden was expressed many times during his ministry. A classic representation for this burden is stated explicitly below in message seven of the Life-study of First Timothy given in 1981.

I am deeply burdened by the fact that many who love the Lord Jesus and seek Him have been deceived and frustrated. We must find a way to share with them the spiritual riches the Lord has provided us. Many who truly love the Lord are starving. We must take up the burden to supply them with food. We all need to be good ministers of Christ, serving others with His riches. Let us first be nourished ourselves and then minister this nourishment to all the people of God (Life-study of 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon, p. 72)

A PRAYER CONCERNING THE PUBLICATIONS

Lord, we worship You. We sincerely confess that we are a group of people who have received mercy. We are the offscouring of the world and the scum of all things. We are worth nothing, we are nothing, we have nothing, and we can do nothing. But, Lord You chose us and separated us, and You have made us useful vessels in Your hands. We thank You for the portion of usefulness that You have given us. We thank You for greatly blessing this publication work so that the riches of Your truth have been stored up in the publications. We believe that Your grace is sufficient for us. Everyday we want to be overshadowed by Your grace to experience and enjoy the supply of this grace. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 5, p. 233).